

UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE

Faculté d'éducation

**L'approche de pleine conscience pour
atténuer l'anxiété éprouvée lors de la présentation orale
chez les étudiants du cégep des cours d'Anglais Langue Seconde (ALS)**

A Mindfulness Approach for the
Mitigation of Oral Presentation Anxiety in CEGEP ESL Students

Par
MARGARET GILLESPIE
10030904

Essai présenté à la Faculté d'éducation
en vue de l'obtention du grade de
Maître en enseignement (M. Éd.)
Maîtrise en enseignement au collégial

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RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cette étude était de déterminer si l'introduction de techniques de réduction du stress lié à la pleine conscience pouvait entraîner une diminution de l'anxiété signalée, liée à l'exécution de présentations orales pour les étudiants inscrits aux cours d'anglais langue seconde des deuxième et troisième trimestres du CEGEP. Dans les cégeps du Québec, les élèves sont placés dans l'un des quatre niveaux de difficulté et reçoivent 90 heures de cours d'anglais langue seconde (ALS). Très souvent, les étudiants signalent que l'aspect le plus difficile de leur cours d'ALS est l'obligation de faire des présentations orales devant leurs pairs. Le stress et l'anxiété associés à cette tâche peuvent créer un véritable obstacle à la réussite pour certains élèves. Pour ce projet, la chercheuse a familiarisé ses étudiants avec les techniques de méditation de la pleine conscience. À l'aide de questionnaires pré- et post-intervention adaptés de ceux de Brown (2003) et Horwitz (1986) et d'un groupe de discussion, les réponses des étudiants au sujet de l'utilité de ces techniques pour réduire le stress des présentations ont été évaluées. En introduisant ces techniques sur une période de quatre semaines, les élèves ont été en mesure d'acquérir des habiletés qui, avec une pratique continue, leur permettraient de gérer le stress, tout en améliorant leur bien-être physique et émotionnel. Les classes d'anglais langue seconde du cégep ont permis d'explorer les avantages de la sensibilisation à la pleine conscience, tout en respectant les objectifs du cours du Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES).

Tout en incorporant la théorie de l'apprentissage social et émotionnel (Comer, 1988), les élèves ont pu utiliser le temps du cours pour lire, écouter, écrire et parler en anglais, tout en apprenant et en pratiquant des techniques de pleine conscience, en vue de leur présentation orale finale. Les résultats de l'étude indiquent que la formation sur la pleine conscience a eu une influence positive sur la réduction du stress, pour les deux groupes d'étudiants participant à la recherche. Les étudiants du deuxième semestre de l'enseignement intermédiaire supérieur ont signalé une diminution globale du stress de 16,7 %, tandis que les étudiants du troisième semestre de l'enseignement intermédiaire du niveau intermédiaire ont signalé une diminution de 4,2 %.

La méditation a le potentiel d'altérer le cerveau humain et des études sur les méditants ont montré que les personnes qui ont participé à un cours de méditation de huit semaines ont rapporté une réduction de l'anxiété et de la dépression autodéclarées et une augmentation de l'empathie et

de la spiritualité (Wright, 2006). L'anxiété et la dépression sont des états émotionnels bien réels pour de nombreux étudiants au niveau collégial. Au lieu d'avoir à recourir à des médicaments ou à de coûteuses thérapies, le fait de développer une habitude de méditation de pleine conscience disciplinée, tout en se préparant pour des présentations orales, peut contribuer à réduire les signes et les symptômes des élèves ayant des problèmes d'anxiété en classe.

ABSTRACT

This research project outlines a four-week study introducing mindfulness techniques to first and second year intermediate and high-intermediate English as a Second Language college students. Students in CEGEP today report higher levels of anxiety than generations before them. During the application of this four-week module, students were asked to read, listen, write and speak about the topic of mindfulness, as well, they participated in a body-scan meditation, and practiced becoming aware of their senses while eating a raisin and then sipping water. The introduction of these basic mindfulness stress reduction techniques was offered within the context of their ESL course in preparation for their final oral evaluation, which they presented individually before their peers. The purpose of this study was to practice techniques of mindfulness stress reduction, such as emotion and breath awareness, in order for these skills to be applied in preparation for, and during the performing of the final oral presentations. Through self-reporting using pre- and post- module questionnaires, the high-intermediate students saw a reduction in anxiety of 16.7% while the intermediate students reported a reduction of 4.2%.

The research was conducted in order to explore the potential benefits of mindfulness practice for reducing anxiety related to the stressful event of speaking before a group. The research was undertaken with the intention that the introduction and continued implementation of mindfulness practice could have a lasting impact on student's personal lives, as well as within their academic and professional careers.

Key Words: Mindfulness, Meditation, Anxiety, Oral Presentation, ESL, Academic Stress, Social and Emotional Learning Theory, Depression

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEGEP	Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EPP	Easwaran's Eight-Point Program
ESL	English Second Language
FLCA	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety
GPA	Grade Point Average
MAAS	Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale
MAAT	Monitor and Acceptance Theory
MBSR	Mindfulness Base Stress Reduction
MEES	Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
MPQ	Multicultural Personality Questionnaire
PEACE	Pause, Exhale, Acknowledge, Choose, and Engage
RASCALS	Regroupement au service des CÉGEPs, anglais langue seconde
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning Theory

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the introduction of mindfulness stress reduction techniques could lead to a decrease in reported anxiety, related to the performing of oral presentations for students enrolled in second and third semester CEGEP English as a Second Language courses. In CEGEPs across Quebec, students are placed in one of four difficulty levels and receive ninety hours of ESL instruction. Very often, students report that the most challenging aspect of their ESL course is the requirement to perform oral presentations in front of their peers. The stress and anxiety associated with this task can create a genuine obstacle to success for some students. For this project, the researcher familiarised her students with mindfulness meditation techniques. Using pre- and post-intervention questionnaires adapted from Brown (2003) and Horwitz (1986), as well as a focus group, it was measured whether students found these techniques useful for coping with the stress of performing presentations. By introducing these techniques over a four-week period, students had the chance to learn skills that, with continuing practice, could allow them to cope with stress more easily, while also positively affecting their physical and emotional well-being. The college ESL classroom setting allowed for the exploration of the benefits of mindfulness awareness training, while respecting the Ministry of Education (MEES) course objectives. While incorporating Social and Emotional Learning Theory (Comer, 1988), students were able to use course time to read, listen, write and speak in English, while learning about and practicing mindfulness techniques, in preparation for their final oral presentation performance. As well, the results from the study indicate that the inclusion of mindfulness training had a positive influence on stress reduction for both sets of students involved in the research. The second semester high-intermediate students reported an overall decrease in stress by 16.7%, while the intermediate, third semester intermediate-level students reported a decrease of 4.2%.

Meditation has the potential to alter the human brain and studies on meditators has shown that people who participated in an eight-week meditation course reported a reduction of self-reported anxiety and depression and an increase in empathy and spirituality (Wright, 2006). Anxiety and depression are very real emotional states for many students at the CEGEP level. Instead of having to turn to medication or expensive therapies, perhaps learning about the benefits and the simplicity of developing a disciplined mindfulness meditation habit, while preparing for oral presentations, could help make an important difference in the lives of anxious students.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the defining characteristics of young Canadians is their high level of anxiety and depression. “Generation Text” (Osit, 2008) having grown up with cellphones and social media, are now being diagnosed with more mental disorders, including depression and sleep disturbances, than any generation before them. (Thomée, Härenstam & Hagberg, 2011). Today, close to 20% of 12 to 19-year-olds suffer from anxiety, stress and depression while research shows a 70% increase in the reporting of psychological disorders over the last 80 years for young adults. (Twenge, et al., 2010). In Quebec, a 2014 study of 14 CEGEPSs revealed that 35.1% of students suffered from anxiety either often or all of the time, and that 17.1% were under large amounts of psychological stress. The teenage brain does not reach full maturation until the mid to late 20’s and during this adolescent phase the stress felt by teenagers is acute (Gosselin & Ducharme 2015).

As part of the CEGEP core curriculum, students are required to take at least two second language courses. Within the ministerial objectives for these courses, student at all levels are evaluated on their ability to communicate orally in English (or French for students in English CEGEPS). Frequently students report significant anxiety about having to speak in front of a group and consistently inquire as to how the oral evaluations will take place, in which format, and whether they will be required to speak before the whole class. Greater than their concern for achieving a level of language competency, lies the challenge of having to stand before their peers. The most timid students sometimes even choose to forgo the oral evaluation and end up with a reduced score. This severe apprehension about speaking in front of a group is extremely common for emerging adults, and while, of course this hesitation can affect people of any age, due to ESL course requirements, CEGEP students find themselves particularly in the line of fire.

This apprehension to present in front of a class, coupled with the linguistic challenge of speaking in a second language (or third for many) is a significant factor affecting language student’s success. Currently, students are left on their own to deal with the task of overcoming their concerns for achieving good grades in oral presentations, despite the fact that their social context and very brain structure makes it a particular challenge.

Within the context of CEGEP ESL courses, there are no mechanisms in place to help students psychologically prepare for the ministerial requirement to demonstrate oral language competency. Students need support and guidance within their required courses in order to acquire important life skills and at the moment this guidance is lacking. This study was designed to test an innovative approach to mitigating this anxiety for oral presentations.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As students in Quebec's CEGEP system are suffering from unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety, it is an essential task of educators to teach not just academic skills, but to also encourage the development of coping skills. The necessity for our students to develop social and affective skills, is in accordance with Social and Emotional Learning theory (SEL) that was developed in the 1960's by Yale researcher James Comer, who advanced the concept that "that the key to academic achievement is to promote psychological development in students" (Comer, 1988). He felt that promoting the development of critical life skills could have an important impact on academic performance. Further to the idea that the soft skills of character can be taught, in 1995, the book "Emotional Intelligence" (EI) was published by Daniel Goleman. He argued that the ability to know oneself and to be able to perform under pressure were highly valuable and acquirable skills. Before this, in the 1970's, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was developed at Harvard Medical School by Jon Kabat Zinn. He began using meditation and breathing awareness as a way to help patients cope with pain and stress. In 2007, MBSR was first introduced into schools in the UK, and ever since, the idea of adding mindfulness training to the classroom has been gaining popularity in both Europe and North America. Currently, mindfulness and meditation are now part of the curriculum for over 370 schools in England and is making headway in Quebec where some high schools begin their day with "mindful minutes".

The underlying values of SEL and MBSR work together. The framework of SEL supports the principles of the teaching of MBSR. The five main competencies of SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, while MBSR teaches attention development, resiliency and well-being.

Beginning with *self-awareness*, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Osher, 2016), this is "the ability to recognize one's emotions, strengths and limitations, and values". The practice of mindfulness develops the understanding of the nature of the mind as well as developing emotional awareness. Meditation deals specifically with how the mind moves to generate thoughts and feelings. This self-awareness is the first goal of MBSR. The classroom activities included in this research were mindful breathing, listening to a body scan

audio and reflective free writing, all examples of how MBSR is supported within the framework of SEL.

Secondly, SEL aims to help with *self-management*. This ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in diverse situations, including the ability to manage stress, control impulses, and set and achieve goals (Osher, 2016) is developed in MBSR through the focus of attention on emotions as they rise, as well as in the process of letting them go without reaction. Mindful breathing, body scanning, and movement such as walking meditation or yoga all contribute to attaining self-management.

The third competency of SEL is *social awareness*. This entails the ability to adopt the perspective of those with different backgrounds, the understanding of social and cultural norms, as well as recognizing available resources and supports. (Osher, 2016). Mindfulness training encourages, through the development of non-judgement, the fostering of empathy and compassion for self and others. In this experiment, students are asked to listen to others and to be aware of non-judgement during the activity. Another important practice of MBSR is the practice of “loving kindness” meditation. This is the opening up of the mind and heart during meditation to create a feeling of selflessness and goodwill. As students practice being kinder to others, they in turn practice becoming kinder to themselves. This self-compassion may even to lead to greater life satisfaction. (Bluthe, 2014).

Relationship skills are the fourth competency of SEL. This ability refers to the capacity to establish positive relationships with different types of people, as well as communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate peer pressure, negotiating conflict, and seeking help when necessary. (Osher 2016) Through listening, dialogue and activities that require cooperation, MBSR connects to the objectives of SEL. In this research project, students worked with partners and small groups to both listen and discuss with each other, while being asked to be mindful of their thoughts and feelings while in their groups.

Responsible decision making is the final competency of SEL. Through the application of mindfulness training, students practice making decisions based on caring awareness, and non-judgement. The activities in this study that supported these competencies included writing reflection based on their experiences in class and their outside class assignments.

Social and Emotional Learning theory provided a solid platform for the teaching of mindfulness-based activities within the CEGEP ESL classroom. While respecting the ministerial objectives of the course, the teacher introduced novel material about the theory of mindfulness practice while allowing students to improve their ESL skills and better prepared them for the daunting task of presenting orally in front of a group of their peers.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEENAGE BRAIN AND ESL ANXIETY

Oral presentations in CEGEP ESL classes are traditionally performed either one-on-one with the teacher, or a student stands alone in front of a small group or an entire class. The evaluator focuses on the student's language accuracy and ability to communicate effectively. It is important for students to be able to perform adequately during these evaluations, as the ministerial objective to speak sufficiently in English is a basic requirement at every level. How can we set students up for success in the accomplishment of this skill knowing that for many of them the psychological barriers of stress and anxiety are deeply affecting their ability to communicate in English to their full capacity? Perhaps by better understanding how student's brains function at this stage in life, and working towards increasing their own self-knowledge through mindfulness, this barrier to their success can be lifted.

Most CEGEP students range in age between 17 to 21. Arnett (2000) developed the theory that this period of life should be called "Emerging Adulthood". He believed that at this time young people are at a very specific stage in social development where they experience identity exploration, self-focus, and a feeling of being 'in between' that comes with considerable instability. Although their brains are still developing, emerging adults are less impulsive than they were when they were younger and are able to better plan and evaluate situations as they mature.

Blakemore (2006) says that throughout the teenage years, teenage brains are still developing and do not reach full maturation until the mid to late 20's, therefore the stress felt by teenagers is acute. Their pre-frontal cortex is particularly active, intensifying their feelings of self-consciousness, heightened sensitivity to social inclusion, causing a lack of impulse control and increasing their capacity for risk-taking behaviours. As well, Romeo (2013) studied the impact of hormonal changes on the developing adolescent brains. He found that teenagers have higher levels of stress-induced cortisol than do younger children or those in early adolescence. When teenagers from 15 to 17 become stressed, not only do they feel the stress more intensely than adults, it also takes them longer to return to a normal relaxed state.

In terms of stress felt specifically by ESL students, Shao (2013) completed a study of 510 Chinese students' emotional intelligence (EI) and English classroom anxiety. He found that students with a higher level of emotional intelligence (awareness of one's emotions) were better able to manage their stress and stay positive while facing the challenges of learning English than students who lacked EI. He remarked that the anxiety felt in learning a language was different from other subject areas because of the linguistic and sociocultural demands that it places on learners. As Krashen (1987) proposed, anxious language learners have an affective filter that impedes language acquisition.

As well, Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) redid a study carried out in 1992 measuring the anxiety of language learning students felt in different learning situations. They found that higher anxiety students had significantly lower oral exam grades on average than students with low or moderate anxiety. They found that the added difficulty of having to show mastery of a task along with having to combine grammar notions that they have studied, increases anxiety. This anxiety shows up as self-centered thoughts, feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure and emotional reactions.

In an interesting look at how language learners perceived themselves, Gregersen (2003) conducted a study where she made audio recordings of language learners as they watched themselves in a videotaped oral interview. For the students who were perfectionists, they were more self-critical and unhappy with their performance even though they may have been top students. The highly anxious participants tended to fear being judged by their peers. This perceived evaluation by others is a distinguishing factor between anxious and non-anxious learners. Both anxious students and perfectionists were highly concerned about mistakes they had made, while the anxious students attributed their errors more often to their anxiety rather than a lack of knowledge. Gregersen said that in order to overcome negative self-beliefs, these perfectionists must learn to see these beliefs as hypotheses instead of facts. She suggests that all learners be reminded of the value of controlling their emotional state when speaking the target language. She talked about the importance for learners to realise that errors are a normal and acceptable part of everyone's experience and to see the classroom as a place to not simply demonstrate knowledge and skill, but also as a place to gain it.

3.2 RESEARCH ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

An empirical study by Deweale (2014) sought to determine whether higher levels of EI lowered anxiety in the foreign language classroom. By creating an online survey, Deweale gathered data for 348 English language learners in Saudi Arabia. Using an adapted version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz (1986) as well as the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2012) which assesses psychological well-being and adaptability in a foreign environment, the researcher found that students who scored higher on the MPQ questionnaire reported less FLCA. In other words, the greater the emotional stability, the less likely would students feel anxiety while learning a new language. In a similar study, comparing EI to GPA (Grade Point Average) for a group of seventy-eight fourteen to seventeen-year-olds took the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence measuring general intelligence and social competence. These results were measured against academic grades and, as expected, it was found that the higher a student scored in EI, the higher the academic achievement. Clearly, our emotions affect how and what we learn. Liff (2003) identified six competencies in which learning occurs and which are all related to the interpersonal growth of college students. These competencies are self-awareness and self-advocacy, self-regulation of emotions, goal setting, self-monitoring, empathy and social skills. Liff calls upon educators to create environments, systems and relationships that will nurture the development of these skills in order to allow students to reach their full academic potential.

3.3 RESEARCH ON MINDFULNESS BASED LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

As research suggests, the ability to control their emotions plays heavily in the favour of anxious language students. Could this skill be taught to CEGEP students willing to improve their mental state when faced with not only language stress but also other stress that comes with being a student? Could there be a place for learning about this emotional control in the ESL classroom? Quebec CEGEP ESL teachers have many options available to them as to which themes they choose to cover in the first of the two required ESL courses. This may just be an ideal place to introduce students to the subject of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was created by Jon Kabat Zinn in 1979 as a way to improve quality of life for patients through meditation, yoga and mindfulness. In recent

years, the instruction of MBSR has made its way into mainstream education. To begin, Fialova (2014) studied whether healthy living habits should be included in school curriculum. She found that a conscious attitude toward good health and a clear awareness of the rules for good health were the basis for living a healthy lifestyle. She believes that students benefit when they are taught how to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem and that school is an appropriate setting for instilling healthy lifelong habits including setting the groundwork for regular mindfulness practice.

More specifically, Ernest (2013) proposes MBSR as an alternative approach to behaviour modification for teens saying that including it in a program of instruction can help to reduce stress, pain and anxiety. He sums up his approach as PEACE: Pause, Exhale, Acknowledge, Choose, and Engage. He believes it can be used to help students control their own behaviours in an academic setting. This is similar to an approach suggested by Lindsay (2017) called Monitor and Acceptance Theory (MAT). Like MBSR, this approach stresses attention monitoring in ongoing awareness while acceptance refers to nonjudgement toward internal and external experiences.

Oren (2014) talks about how the concept of mindfulness is becoming widespread as science begins to study the effects of religious experience and how education is following the path created by science. There is a blurring of boundaries between religiosity/secularity and education. He talks about the history of contemplative practice and how it has inched its way mainstream as a source of stress reduction. He says that mindfulness is both a method of inquiry as well an object of research itself.

Zelazo (2012) discusses how mindfulness training could have a positive on both children and adolescents. He says that on both cognitive and emotional levels mindfulness training interrupts automatic emotional responses, which results in an emotional stability and opens up options for responses and reactions. These benefits impact both social and academic success.

Newman (2013) talks about bringing contemplative practice into the classroom where students are bombarded with today's technology. Saying, "If teachers of a certain age don't try to teach wisdom, with heart and mind and soul and strength – then who will?" She uses lectures to teach attention and presence and promotes active listening the development of memory to cultivate personal and cultural reasons to value what is learned. She believes this is important or else no significant learning can occur. She asks teachers to be a model by saying no to multitasking, virtual living and constant instant communication.

For higher education, Kiyomi (2012) explored whether the incorporation of mindfulness would be beneficial to this community. The study investigated the effects of mindfulness practice on college student learning outcomes. Students were led in 10-minute meditation sessions once a week. They assessed psychological well-being, sense of capacity for learning in the classroom, and learning outcomes. They found that mindfulness awareness could have a positive impact on a broad range of students whether or not they had prior interest or experience with mindfulness, but that statistically the mindfulness awareness did not influence learning outcomes.

Broderick (2009) discusses the implementation of a mindfulness-training program at a private girl's high school within their health class curriculum. Student were highly satisfied and reported increased feeling of calmness, relaxation and self-acceptance.

Waszcuk (2015) studied over two thousand sets of sixteen-year-old twins to find out if a sensitivity to anxiety symptoms (mindfulness) and the belief that they are harmful, contribute to depression. Although typically mindfulness training is associated with high self-esteem and emotional control, the study showed that both nature and nurture play a role an important role in adolescent mindfulness.

3.4 RESEARCH ON MINDFULNESS INCLUDING TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Haynes (2013) discusses the use of contemplative practices in the classroom. She organized specific courses around mindfulness and offers a short description of classroom activities that that can be used to introduce students to mindfulness theory including six points of focus: posture, mindful breathing, walking meditation, eye practices, freewriting and day of mindfulness. She recommends that teachers interested in teaching the practice of mindfulness should first learn it for themselves.

Jones (2013) says that possessing adequate social and emotional skills is imperative in order to be an effective teacher. These skills include emotional processing; being able to understand and label feelings, social interpersonal skills, as well as being able to read social cues, have positive interactions with students, and cognitive regulation, (maintaining attention and focus). These competencies influence the quality of student/teacher interaction. As well, the teacher modeling these skills for the student, teaches students how to handle disruptions and distractions in a calm way. A teacher who is calm and in control helps to encourage student creativity and autonomy.

3.5 RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS

Thayer (2017) looked at how the application of mindfulness in a teacher's interaction with her students can be beneficial to both the teacher and the student. Classrooms are teeming with emotional life and if the teacher approaches her students from the perspective of mindfulness, she is better at recognizing her emotions and gauging responses to students. She can respond to students' needs more effectively as well as better navigate power struggles that can disrupt classroom harmony. A mindful teacher experiences her emotions without judgement and models this self-regulation to her students. Mindfulness training enhances self-compassion and promotes emotionally supportive behaviour in the classroom.

Research by Sharp and Jennings (2015) found that high school and elementary teachers are often at risk of burnout due to the intense demands they face. There is little research about how teachers who are on the verge of burnout can benefit from mindfulness training, so the authors sought to explore how educators reported being able to apply mindfulness techniques during student interactions and their reflections on this training. The researchers implemented four weeks of mindfulness training, after which they interviewed the teachers about the effects. The teachers reported being able to incorporate many of the metaphors introduced to visualize how they were feeling during moments of crisis. Expressions such as "elevator going up" when they could feel themselves starting to react emotionally, or "flipping my lid" when they felt they were going to burst out with anger allowed them to gain emotional control and offer a wider perspective. This awareness helped them to better understand the difference between responding and reacting in difficult situations, which also allowed for more compassion and humour in their interactions with students. The teachers reported they had achieved more perspective and calm through their mindfulness training.

3.6 RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICE FOR STUDENTS

High levels of stress are associated with multiple negative physical and psychological effects. Oman, Thoresen, Plante & Flinders (2008) engaged undergraduate student participants in a research study asking them to complete an 8-week meditation training course based on either

MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) or EPP (Easwaran's Eight-Point Program). The researchers reported that at the end of the training period all of the students reported a decrease in feelings of stress, and an increase in feelings of forgiveness. There was no difference in outcomes for the two methods studied; indicating that meditation training in either of these methods can be beneficial for stress reduction.

Garretson (2010) talks about teaching her ESL students to become more reflective in their writing and language learning process by applying the principles of mindfulness practice. The habits of awareness and inner noticing applied to reading and writing exercises worked to cultivate reflective learning strategies. Through freewriting and encouraging students to trust their inner processes and to observe their work with non-judgement and curiosity, the students learned to understand reading and writing as a reflective process.

Another study by Dundas (2016), evaluated whether MBSR training with anxious undergraduate and master's students would reduce exam anxiety. Five groups of students who were experiencing anxiety self-registered for an eight-week MBSR program. These students filled out a questionnaire measuring anxiety and self-confidence at the beginning of the mindfulness training, and upon training completion, three days before doing their first post-mindfulness training academic exam. Another control group of students who did not seek help were also given the same questionnaires to answer at the beginning of the study as well as three days before an exam. As expected, the students who underwent MBSR training reported an increase in self-esteem and general self-efficacy while the control did not show these changes. Their findings indicate that mindfulness training may be helpful in a college setting to help decrease evaluation anxiety and may produce lasting effects making mindfulness training a worthwhile pursuit for college students.

3.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Can the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques contribute to the mitigation of oral presentation anxiety in the college ESL classroom?

HYPOTHESIS 1: The introduction of the concept of mindfulness will create an interest among some of the students to try to adopt the practice for stress reduction, while other

students will choose to continue to use their own previous coping mechanisms to deal with oral presentation anxiety.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What do anxious students say about the experience of mindfulness activities and their effect on their presentation anxiety?

HYPOTHESIS 2: It is expected that anxious students will report an interest in the mindfulness activities covered in class, and that some of them will choose to pursue mindfulness techniques as a long-term key to future anxiety reduction.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For this qualitative research experiment, the presentation of this “mindfulness module” took place over a four-week period at the end of the winter semester of 2018 with sixty-seven high-intermediate (102) level students, as well as at the end of the autumn semester of 2018 with sixty-six intermediate (101) level students.

The primary goal of teaching mindfulness techniques to students is to encourage students to become aware of their own thoughts and emotions in order to learn from their experience in ways that would allow them to apply this metacognitive knowledge in their personal, academic and professional lives. In keeping with SEL, the application of these techniques should enable students to further develop their emotional and social skills. The first focus of the methodology was how the adoption of mindfulness techniques could help to reduce stress in oral presentations for ESL students, and what strategies ESL teachers could implement in order to encourage the adoption of mindfulness activities among their students.

The target population for this research study is all CEGEP language students. The convenience sample for this research study was second and third semester CEGEP students studying at CEGEP Gerald Godin in Ste. Geneviève, Quebec, who were taking the first and second course in English as a Second Language as part of the ministerial General Education requirements. The second semester students had been placed in the high-intermediate (102) level as determined through a placement test and review of their high school English grade. The third semester students had been placed in the intermediate level (101) and this was their second required ESL course. The average age of the students was eighteen years old, and the majority of the students were living with either one or both of their parents on the West Island of Montreal.

4.2 PROCEDURES

The researcher met with each group of students once per week for a period of four weeks. See Figure 1 for the full timeline of the project activities. In the first week, the researcher first

asked students to anonymously fill out a two-part questionnaire. The first 15 questions measured their levels of self-awareness (adapted from Brown, 2003), where they rated their own levels of present moment awareness in a variety of everyday situations. The next 15 questions asked the students to rate the level of anxiety they experienced faced with the requirement of speaking in class either in the form of oral presentations or by contributing to class discussions (adapted from Horwitz, 1986). This engagement in the measurement of self-awareness and anxiety is one of the five core competencies of SEL. It introduced students to the nature of the mind as well as creating attentiveness to inner processes. The students were then asked to read and summarise an article about the sweeping popularity of mindfulness in universities across Canada, and later watch a video explaining the principles of mindful meditation while taking notes. They then created questions from their notes and switched papers with a partner to test each other's comprehension. For homework, the students were asked to consider downloading a popular free app called "Head Space". The app's inventor is the speaker in the video they had viewed earlier in the class. This reading and responding, as well as listening and writing, all corresponded to the ministerial objectives for developing English language competency within the context of their regular course.

In week two, the students did a freewriting activity when, for three to five minutes they were asked to write down on a piece of paper all of the sensations they were aware of in their body while they lay their heads down on their desks and listened to a narration of a ten-minute body scan. Here, they were asked to check in with their five senses and record on paper all that they perceived once the narration was finished. As they wrote down their thoughts, they were asked to stop and take a conscious breath at the end of every sentence they wrote. The students then watched a video about the challenges of meditation and its benefits and then wrote a paragraph summarizing the video. Their homework was to try to find ten minutes each day to sit in meditation. This exercise fell under the competency of self-management. As students concentrated on their inner world and took conscious breaths, they engaged in self-management, which according to SEL, is required for the achievement of goals. Once again, the free writing, and the listening responded to the ministerial criteria for this ESL course.

In week three, the students wrote an online journal entry about their mindfulness experiences of the previous week. They were then each given a raisin and a drink of water. The students were asked to consider the raisin with conscious awareness of all of their senses while they slowly ate it. Following the raisin investigation, with a partner they were asked to each talk about something

they were looking forward to and something they were stressed about. They were told to try to listen to each without judgement. Also, from time to time, the lights were turned off, which was a signal to stop their conversation, take a sip of water and to mentally note their state of mind at the moment they took a sip. For homework, they were asked to continue to try to meditate every day for ten minutes or to spend ten mindful minutes while walking, eating, exercising, etc. It was suggested that they take the time as they walked to the bus or moved about the school hallways as an opportune time to tune in to their breathing and five senses. In SEL, these activities fall under the competencies of social awareness and relationship skills. Through listening and refraining from judging themselves and others, they were developing mindful listening and conscious dialogue, which could result in increased empathy and compassion for self and others. This small group speaking activity also falls under the ministerial course requirements for practicing oral communication.

In the fourth and final week, the students practiced their oral presentations in front of a small number of their classmates. This practice session allowed them the opportunity to demonstrate before their peers, the presentations they were working on as part of the final test of their speaking skills. Before presenting their oral projects, they were reminded to bring a bottle of water with them and were encouraged to stop and take a drink at any time, in order to center themselves and to practice retrieval of their emotional control.

Finally, when the presentations were finished, all of the students again completed the questionnaire that they filled out at the beginning of the first session. A focus group was formed at the end of the data collection phase and a group of seven students were asked a list of questions about their impressions of the mindfulness techniques that were covered in class and for homework, and whether they felt this introduction to mindfulness had an effect on their anxiety before or during their oral presentations. Again, these final activities fell under two competencies of SEL, self-management and responsible decision making. The students' ability to calmly present in front of the class, and to express their ideas around the topic of their final oral presentations, was the final task of the semester and also the mindfulness module. The goal was that through mindfulness training they had developed more awareness and self-caring which would have enabled them to better confront the challenge of appearing in front of their peers.

It was thought that the introduction of the concept of mindfulness through videos and articles would create an interest among some of the students to try to adopt the practice into their own

daily lives, while other students would choose to continue with their own coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and anxiety.

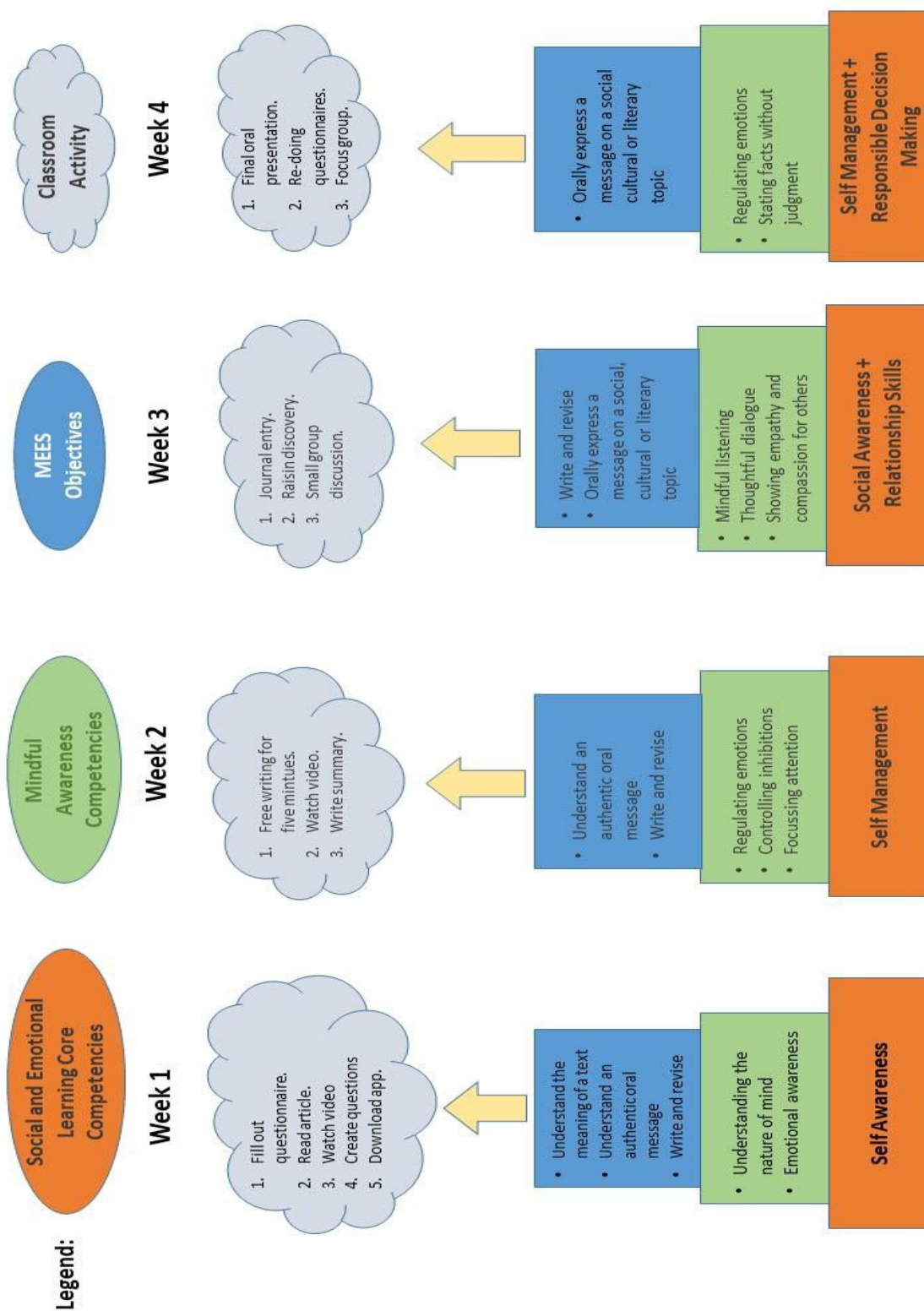


FIGURE 1: PROJECT TIMELINE

4.3 INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaires used in this research study were adapted from Horwitz (1986), “Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale” (FLCA), as well as from Brown (2003), the “Mindfulness Awareness Scale” (MAAS) (see Appendix A). Each questionnaire used a Likert scale, but due to time and group limitations, a full-scale distribution to all study participants from the outset was necessary. For the FLCA questionnaire, the questions were adapted to better reflect student opinions on oral presentation anxiety rather than regular class oral participation. For example, instead of “Even if I am prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.” was changed to, “Even if I am prepared for my oral presentation in English class, I feel anxious about it.” For the MAAS, the questionnaire was included in its original version. The two questionnaires were merged into one document as they were both completed during the first and fourth weeks of the module. Students provided only their student identification numbers during completion, therefore no names appeared.

Other instruments included open-ended questions that were asked to a group of student volunteers during the focus group session at the end of the four-week module. The questions can be found in Appendix C.

Beyond the questionnaires, the students observed two Ted Talk videos, listened to a narrated body scan video, and read one article from Maclean’s magazine, as follows:

- ❑ Week 1: https://www.ted.com/talks/andy_puddicombe_all_it_takes_is_10_mindful_minutes
- ❑ Week 2: <http://www.macleans.ca/education/universities-are-teaching-meditation-to-help-students-control-stress/>
- ❑ Week 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyakh1ncibY>
- ❑ Week 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obYJRmqrqOU>

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Several ethical considerations were addressed in the study. The student participants were provided with letters of consent, clearly disclosing the purpose of the research, information about confidentiality, ethical implications, and expectations for participants (see Appendix B). Consent forms were signed before the research commenced and in the case of students under the age of eighteen, parents also signed the consent form (see Appendix B). In order to preserve participant's anonymity, all questionnaires completed by participants were identified only by student ID number and later masked by codes assigned by the project advisor. It was very important to the researcher that the participants feel comfortable throughout this research project and all necessary steps were taken to create a researcher/participant rapport at each stage. For the students who volunteered to participate in the final focus group, the setting (where and when) was agreed upon by all parties. They were also informed about the voluntary nature of the focus group and their right to withdraw at any time. By addressing these ethical issues, the essential values of the cooperative nature of this project were maintained. There were no known risks or ethical problems involved with participation in this study. Student responses to material covered in class were confidential to the teacher and there was very little opportunity for the risk of feeling vulnerable or exposed.

Focus group participants were able to edit, withdraw, and refine their answers to the focus group questions after it was recorded. All data collected throughout the duration of this study which included paper copies of questionnaires, were stored in a locked office. By taking steps to reduce the risk involved with participation in this study, the aim was to maintain the comfort of the participants and to establish trust.

The ethics review application and certificate can be found in Appendix D and E.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The first question the researcher sought to answer was whether *the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques could contribute to the mitigation of oral presentation anxiety in the college ESL classroom.*

The data were collected from four groups of CEGEP level ESL students. The first collection came from a sample of 66 students who were completing their first CEGEP ESL course. These students were at the high-intermediate level (102) and were registered in five of the six different programs offered at the college. The majority of them were enrolled in the Natural Sciences program. There were 36 female students and 28 male students. This level of student often is very comfortable speaking in English and may even socialise or work in English on a regular basis. That which distinguishes a high-intermediate student from an advanced student is most often the accuracy of their written language.

The second data sample was collected from 47 students from two groups of intermediate level-students (101) during the fall semester of 2018. This was the second ESL course for these students. In this group, there were 33 females and 14 males. They were enrolled in nine different programs with 53.1% of them enrolled in either the Natural Science program or the Social Science program. In both groups, the students were between 16 to 20 years old. At this intermediate level, students most often do not use English to socialise, but may speak English well enough to function in a part-time job. Often these students lack the confidence, and propensity to practice that the students at the high-intermediate level students possess.

5.2 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM: ANXIOUS LEARNERS

Pre-intervention and post-intervention questionnaires were distributed to 113 students, and 226 questionnaires were returned. The original research question of “Can the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques contribute to the mitigation of oral presentation anxiety in the college ESL classroom?” was targeted by this two-part questionnaire which focussed

on student's self evaluation of their own level of mindfulness, followed by questions about the level of anxiety they feel when performing oral presentations. The second research question "What do anxious students say about the experience of mindfulness activities and their effect on their presentation anxiety?" was targeted in the focus group that was held at the end of the second semester of data gathering.

The first 15 questions were based on the MAAS questionnaire from Brown, K.W. & Ryan. (2003) which was built to measure the role of mindfulness in psychological well-being. The questions explored the subject's emotional sensitivity and overall awareness of self during everyday activities. The second part of the questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., Cope, J. (1986) (FLCA) and was a measurement of foreign language anxiety with the questions adapted to focus on student's emotional state specifically related to oral presentations. It included 18 questions, with the first 15 directly related to awareness of anxiety, while the last three questions identified, gender, age and program of study.

In order to begin identifying the most anxious students among the study sample, the section of the questionnaire dealing with student's feelings of anxiety in relation to oral presentations contained 15 statements to which the students responded with either "strongly agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree" or "strongly disagree".

Some questions were paired to elicit contrasting responses. During the creation of the database, a question requiring agreement with anxiety, for example, "I tremble when I know it is my turn to do an English oral presentation, the response of "strongly agree" was given the numerical value of one, "agree" was given two, etc.

For questions that measured confidence, such as "It doesn't bother me at all to do English oral presentations." these statements were given an opposite numerical value. "Strongly disagree" was valued at one point, while "strongly agree" was given five. These first 15 questions of the questionnaire measuring levels of anxiety were then tallied and the students who scored between 15 and 30 points for each questionnaire were identified as anxious. Of the 113 students who responded to the questionnaires, in a comparison of levels of anxiety for the pre-questionnaire compared to the post- questionnaire, about one third (30.3%) of the high-intermediate students scored within the range indicating anxiety. In the post-questionnaire, this percentage dropped to 13.6%.

In the intermediate group, for the pre-questionnaire, over one quarter (27.6%) of the students scored under 30. While in the post-questionnaire, in the intermediate group, less than one quarter (23.4%) were in the anxious range. It is interesting to note that the percentage of anxious students decreased in both groups between the two questionnaires. The decrease may be related to the fact that as the semester progresses students become more familiar with the demands of performing an oral presentation. Another possibility, particularly noting the 16.7% drop in anxiety in the high-intermediate, could also be the impact of the mindfulness module intervention.

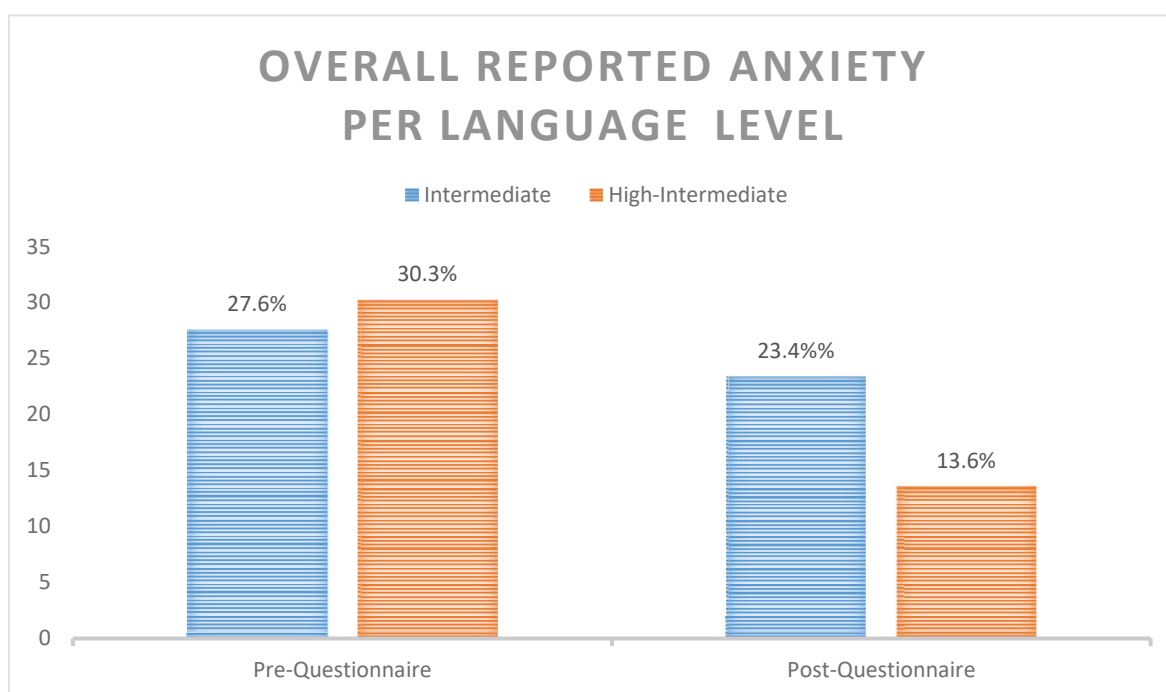


FIGURE 2: REPORTED ANXIETY

With the numbers of anxious students identified for each level, the data were then narrowed down to reflect the responses given by this 29.2% of the 113-student research sample. As the first research question seeks to answer how anxious students respond to the mindfulness activities and its effect on their anxiety, it is these 33 students who will be the focus of the analysis.

5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF ANXIOUS STUDENTS

5.3.1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Once the answers to the contrasting statements were calibrated, a cluster of questions measuring emotional intelligence (EI) was analysed. In keeping with research by Shao (2013), students who have high levels of EI, or rather, the capacity to be aware of, control, and express their emotions, are better equipped to meet the challenge of conquering a new language. Stronger EI allows a student to stay positive when faced with a challenge such as the task of presenting orally in front of a group of their peers. But, as Arnett (2000) found in his studies of the “Emerging Adult”, the emotional stability associated with EI is not fully developed at the age of the typical CEGEP student therefore it is not surprising that many of the students surveyed never feel too confident during oral presentations.

The combined responses of these 33 anxious students to the following questions which touch upon EI, “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am in an oral presentation in English class.”; “I (don’t) worry about making mistakes when I am doing an oral presentation in English class.”; “When I watch other presentations, I keep thinking that the other students present better than I do.” and, “During my oral presentations I can get so nervous I forget the things I know.”; help to give an insight as to how EI is lacking in anxious students. In the pre-intervention questionnaire, 92.8% of the anxious intermediate-level students agreed with these statements. In the high-intermediate group, 89.4% agreed with these statements. In the post-intervention, in the intermediate group the percentage of students in agreement decreased to 89.2%, while in the high-intermediate group the percentage remained constant at 89.4% in agreement. Again, this decrease in anxiety may perhaps, be related to the mindfulness intervention.

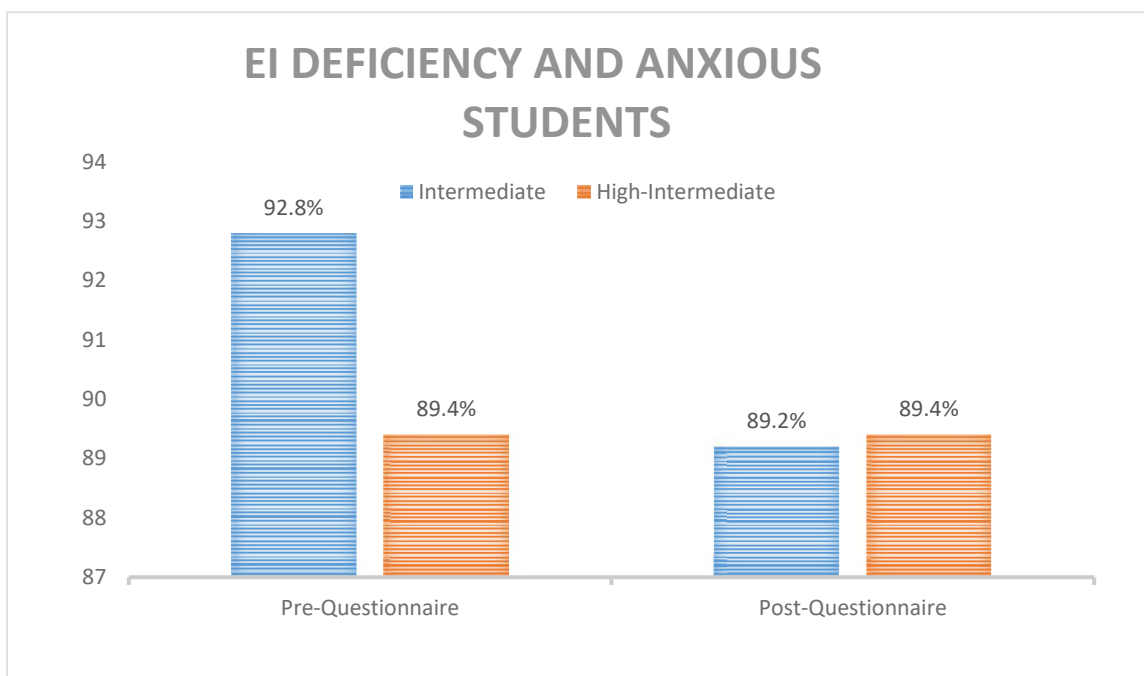


FIGURE 3: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ANXIOUS STUDENTS

5.3.2 PHYSICAL RESPONSE

Another cluster of statements in the questionnaire measured student perception of physical response to the stress of doing oral presentations. The first, "I tremble when I know it is my turn to do an English oral presentation."; "I can feel my heart pounding when I am presenting or about to present an oral presentation in English class,"; and "I feel more tense and nervous about doing an oral presentation in English than I do when presenting in other classes." and "I get nervous and confused when I have to do an oral presentation in English." was agreed to by 85.7 % of the intermediate level anxious students surveyed equally, in both the pre-questionnaire, and the post questionnaire. For the high-intermediate students, 84.2% agreed with these statements in the pre-questionnaire, while 78.9% agreed in the post-questionnaire. This physical response to the stressful situation of performing oral presentations is in keeping with the research by Romeo (2012). His found that adolescents feel stress more acutely and for a more prolonged period of time than do adults. The physical reaction that students feel when called upon to present before their peers is often quite apparent. It may vary from trembling hands, quavering voice, lack of eye contact, or feelings of weakness up to the fear of fainting. Therefore, understandably almost a majority of students agreed with the notion of trembling associated with oral presentations. As well, this falls in line with research by Blakemore (2006) who found that the stress experienced by

teenagers is particularly acute as the pre-frontal cortex of their brain is highly solicited during moments of stress, which intensifies their feelings of self-consciousness.

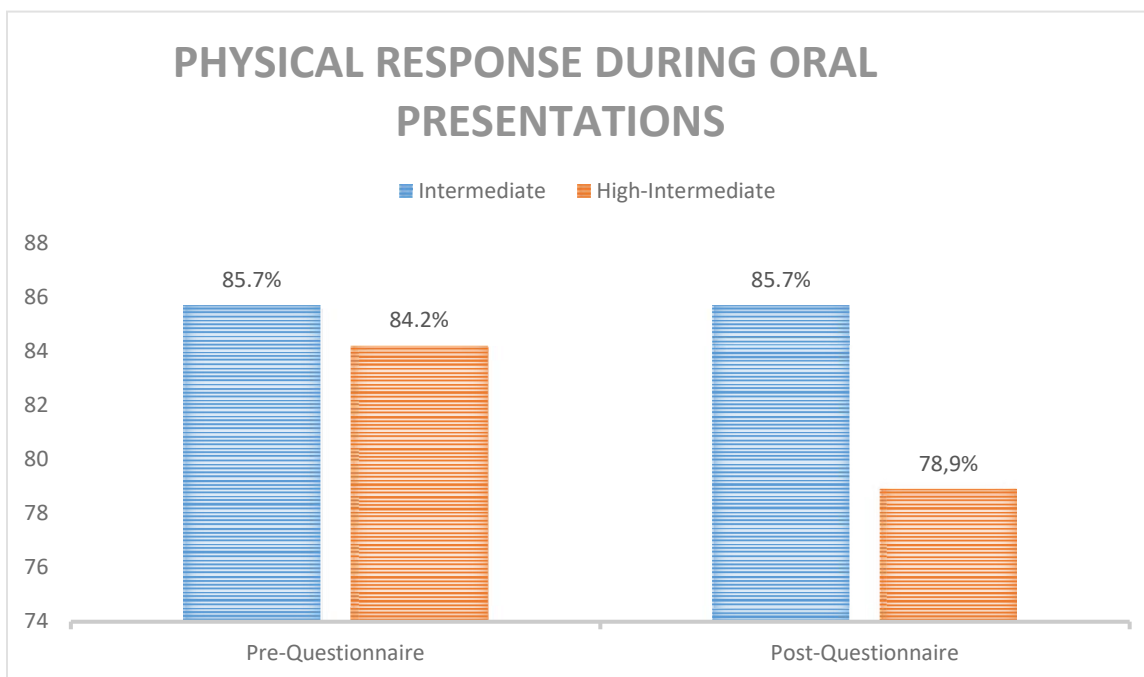


FIGURE 4: PHYSICAL RESPONSE DURING ORAL PRESENTATIONS

A third cluster of questions addressed student's feelings of inadequacy and self-comparison while communicating in English. The statements, "When I watch other presentations I keep thinking that the other students present better than I do.", "I am (not) nervous speaking with English native speakers."; "I always feel that other students speak English better than I do", elicited agreement from 73.8% of the intermediate students in the pre-questionnaire and for the post-questionnaire this increased to 78.5%. For the high-intermediate students, 66.6% were in agreement in the pre-questionnaire, while in the post-questionnaire this fell to 59.6%. These statements support the research by Hewitt and Stephenson (2012), who replicated a 1992 study, where they found that different learning situations had a variety of effects on anxious language learners, and feelings of inadequacy, or the belief that they are lacking the qualities required in order to succeed, are among the negative reactions students may experience in the language classroom. It is interesting to note that within this sample, among the high-intermediate students, there was a decrease of 7% in feelings of inadequacy reported in the post-questionnaire.

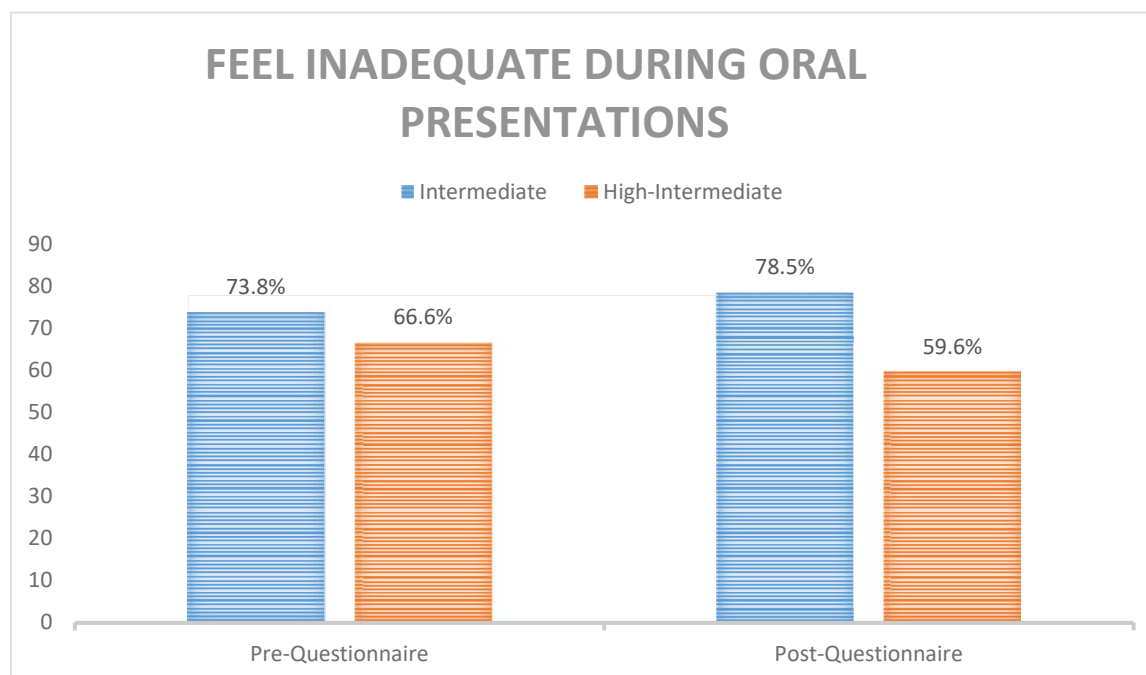


FIGURE 5: FEEL INADEQUATE DURING ORAL PRESENTATIONS

In further identification of anxious students, their agreement with the statements "I am (not) usually at ease during my oral presentations in English class," "During my oral presentations I can get so nervous I forget the things I know," "I (don't) feel pressure to prepare well or my oral evaluations in English class," as well as "Even if I am well prepared for my oral evaluation in English, I feel anxious about it," touch upon the role of perfectionism in anxiety and its impact on student outcomes.

As Gregerson (2003) found, highly anxious students more often attribute their errors to anxiety rather than lack of knowledge and need to understand the importance of errors as part of the learning process. As perfectionism involves the refusal to accept any standard short of perfect, and, since perfectionists are highly concerned about their mistakes, Gregerson suggested that they be encouraged to view their beliefs around the consequences of failing more as a hypothesis, rather than a fact, as a method of reducing pressure on the learner.

Whether perfectionism is a more common trait among higher-level language learners could be a path for future exploration. Within the sample of the 33 anxious students, 80.3% of the intermediate students agreed with these statements on the pre-questionnaire, decreasing to 73.2%

on the post-questionnaire. For the high-intermediate students, 88.1% agreed with these statements in the pre-questionnaire and 84.2% agreed in the post-questionnaire.

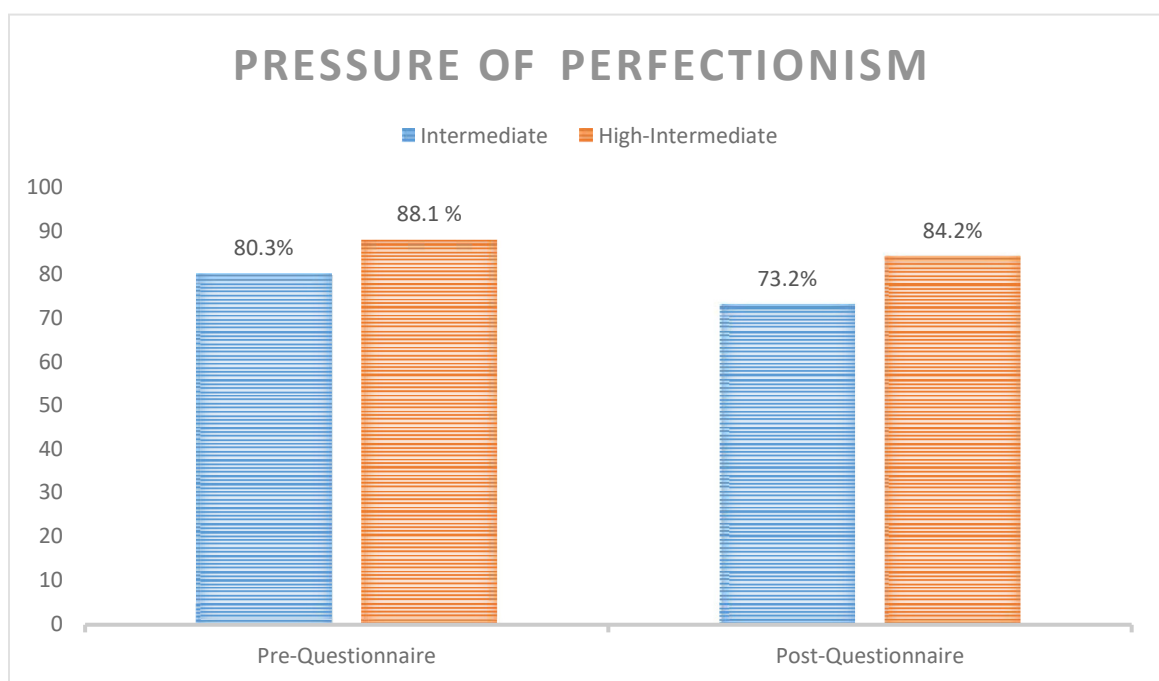


FIGURE 6: PRESSURE OF PERFECTIONISM

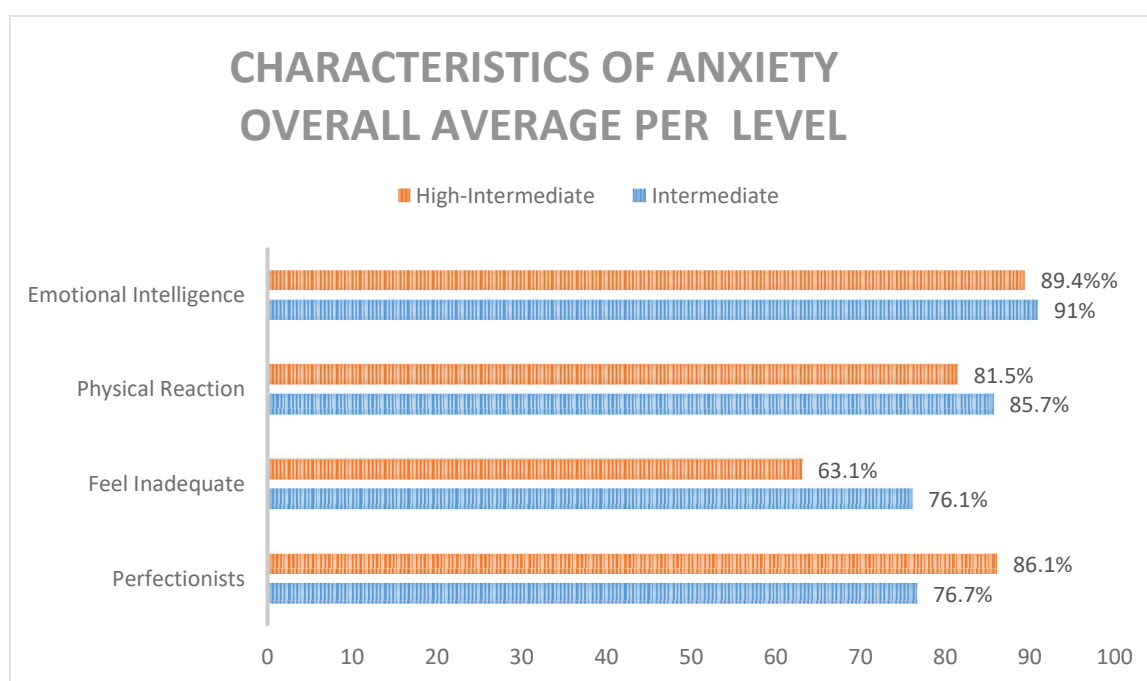


FIGURE 7: SUMMARY OF ANXIETY CHARACTERISTICS

5.4 ANXIOUS STUDENTS AND MINDFULNESS

The first part of the questionnaire was made up of 15 statements to which students could respond with “Almost Always”, “Very Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely”, or “Almost Never”. The questions described emotional or physical situations, where students were asked to respond how often they lost touch with the present moment at these times. Questions have been grouped into clusters dealing with the topics of emotional self-awareness, physical awareness, focus and attention and only the responses given by the 33 anxious students will be considered here.

The first question on the survey tapped into whether students are conscious of their own emotions, and where they rate themselves on basic emotional self-knowledge and focus. As Zelazo (2012) found that mindfulness training interrupts automatic or anxious responses, the student’s emotional awareness level is a factor if they are able to integrate mindfulness practices into their lives. For the statement, “I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.”, on the pre-questionnaire, in the high-intermediate level 26.3% agreed with this statement, whereas a smaller percentage of only 14.2% of the intermediate level agreed. For the post-questionnaire, the percentage of intermediate students who agreed with this statement rose to 35.7%, while in the high-intermediate group this number dropped to 15.7%. The most popular response was “Sometimes”, with a combined total of 42.4% for both levels in the pre-questionnaire.

Next, the statement, “I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.” had a high level of agreement between both levels of students. In the high-intermediate group of anxious students, on both the pre- and post-questionnaire, 17 out of the 19 students (89.4%) agreed.

Likewise, for the intermediate students 13 out of 14 students (92.8%) agreed with this statement in both the pre- and post-questionnaire. Like the high-intermediate group, this statement elicited the highest level of agreement among all of the 15 mindfulness questions. It was expected that students who participated in this study would be focussed on the future, as success is clearly the main goal of the vast majority of CEGEP students.

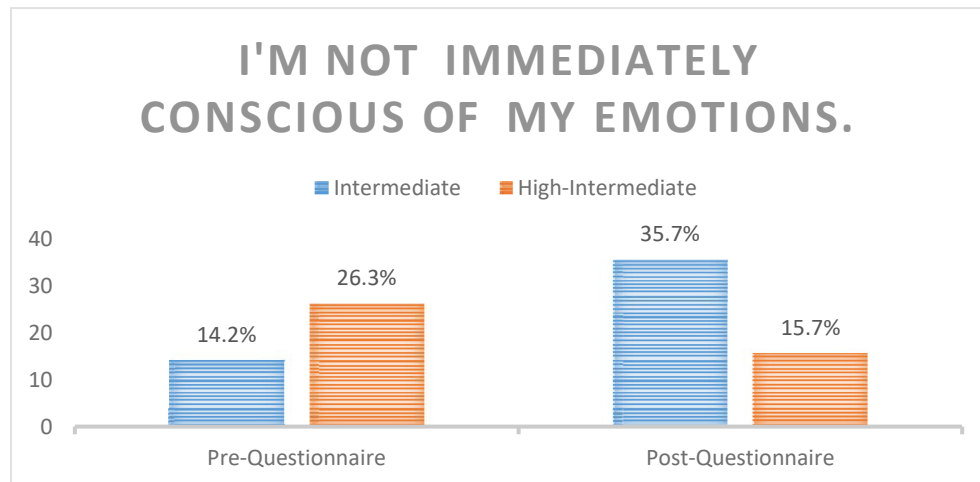


FIGURE 8: EXPERIENCING EMOTION

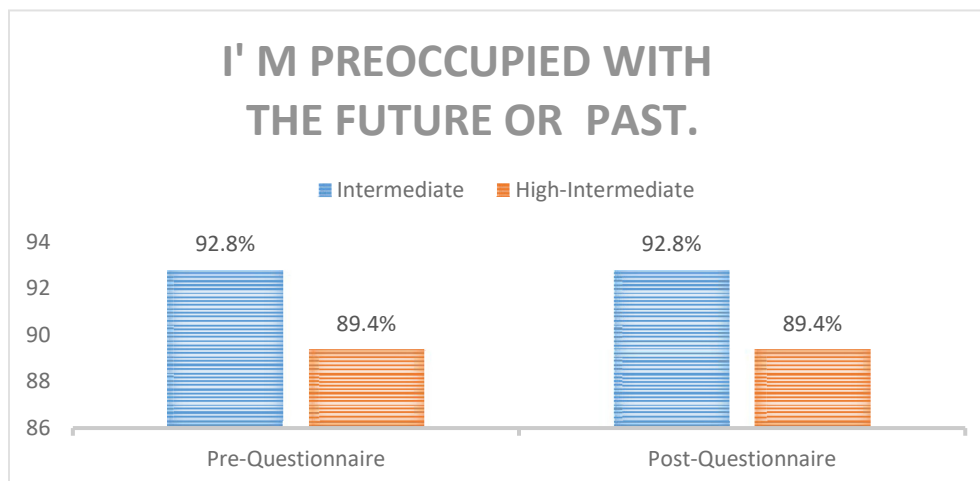


FIGURE 9: PREOCCUPATION WITH FUTURE OR PAST

The next cluster of questions dealt with physical awareness. "I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention or thinking of something else.", "I tend to walk quickly to get where I am going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.", and "I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.", rated students level of physical self-observation. As Haynes (2013) pointed out, bringing mindfulness practice to the classroom involves introducing a variety of meditation techniques such as walking meditation, which requires participants to slow down and feel their breath as it matches their steps, fostering an awareness of the physical body in coordination with breath and thought processes. These questions investigate how aware students are of their own physical bodies as they go about regular activity.

Beginning with "I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention or thinking of something else." in the intermediate group, on the pre-questionnaire, 35.7% of the students agreed with this statement. In the post-questionnaire, 42.8% of the students agreed. For the high-intermediate group, 15.7% of the students agreed to this statement in both the pre-questionnaire, and post-questionnaire.

For the question, "I tend to walk quickly to get where I am going without paying attention to what I experience along the way." In the pre-questionnaire, 28.5% of the intermediate level anxious students agreed that they had some level of unawareness while walking. In the post-questionnaire this number rose to 50%. For the high-intermediate students, 52.6% agreed with this statement in the pre-questionnaire, and rising slightly to 57.8% for the post-questionnaire.

And finally, for the statement, "I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention." on the pre-questionnaire, 21.4% of the intermediate group agreed that they did not notice physical discomfort before it demanded attention. Whereas, on the post questionnaire, this number increased to 35.7%. For the high-intermediate group, 15.7% agreed with this statement in the pre-questionnaire, while in the post-questionnaire this number rose to 47.3%. The expectation was that with mindfulness training, student's level of physical awareness would increase rather than decrease, although it is notable that the practice of walking meditation was not included in this research study.

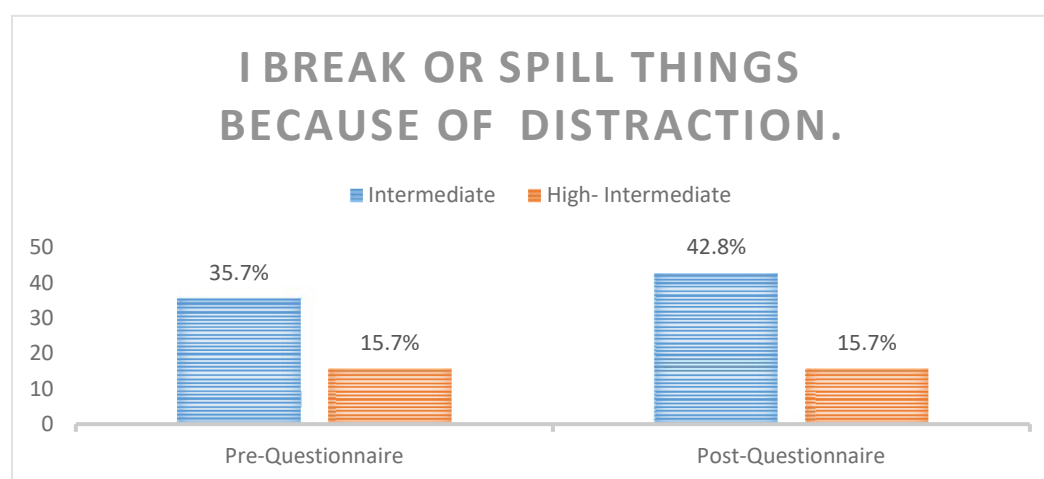


FIGURE 10: DISTRACTEDNESS

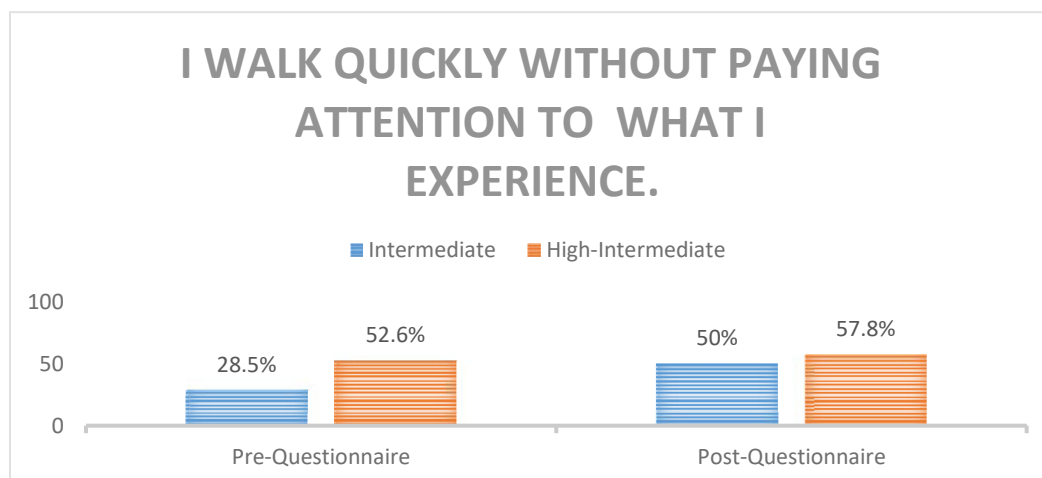


FIGURE 11: WALKING QUICKLY

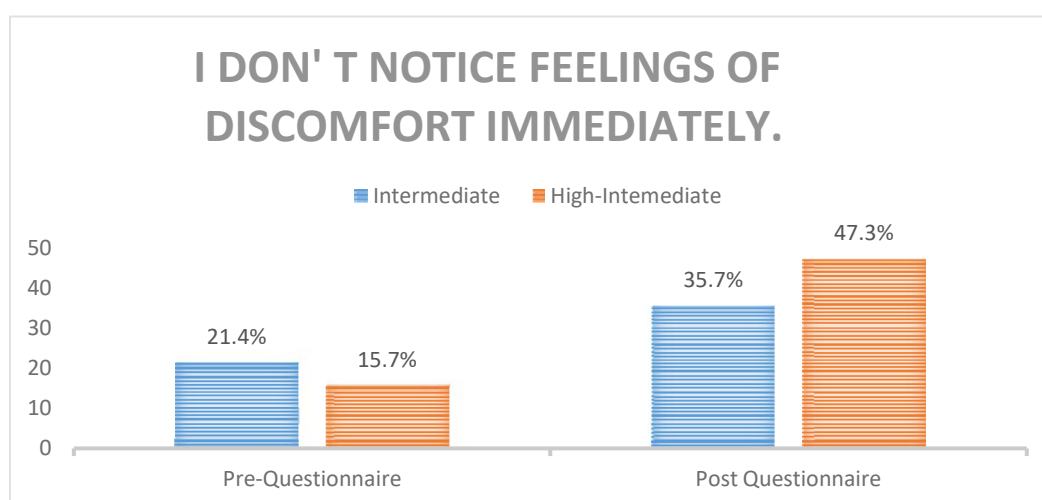


FIGURE 12: PHYSICAL TENSION AND DISCOMFORT

Further questions inquired about student's focus and attention while dealing with others. They included, "I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time," and "I find myself, listening to someone with one ear, while doing something else at the same time." As Ocher (2016) explained, in SEL learning theory, relationship skills are required to develop positive social bonds. This involves active listening and cooperation with others.

In both the pre- and post-questionnaire, 57.1% of the intermediate students agreed with this first statement that they forget names easily. Unlike the intermediate students, for the high-intermediate group, this percentage decreased after the mindfulness intervention. In the pre-

questionnaire for the high-intermediate group, 68.4% of the students were in agreement; while in the post-questionnaire 52.6% were in agreement.

For the statement related to listening to others, the 57.1% of the intermediate-level students agreed with this in the pre-questionnaire, slightly decreasing to 50% in the post-questionnaire. For the high-intermediate students, 26.3% agreed in the pre-questionnaire, jumping up to 63.1% in the post-questionnaire.

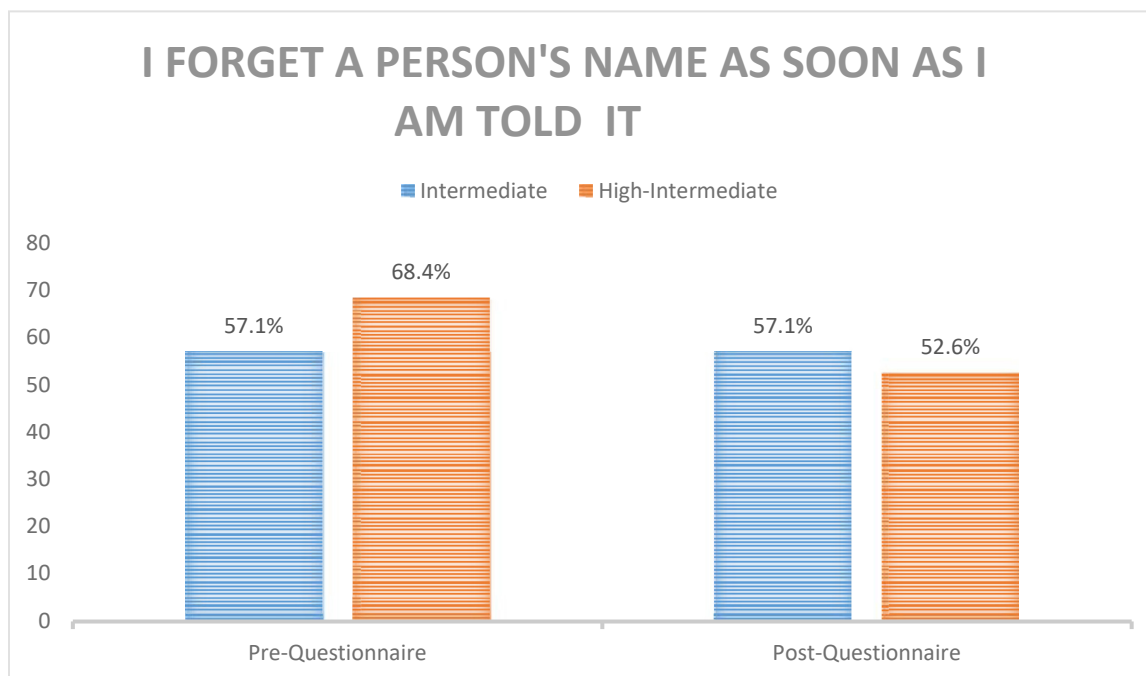


FIGURE 13: FORGETTING NAMES

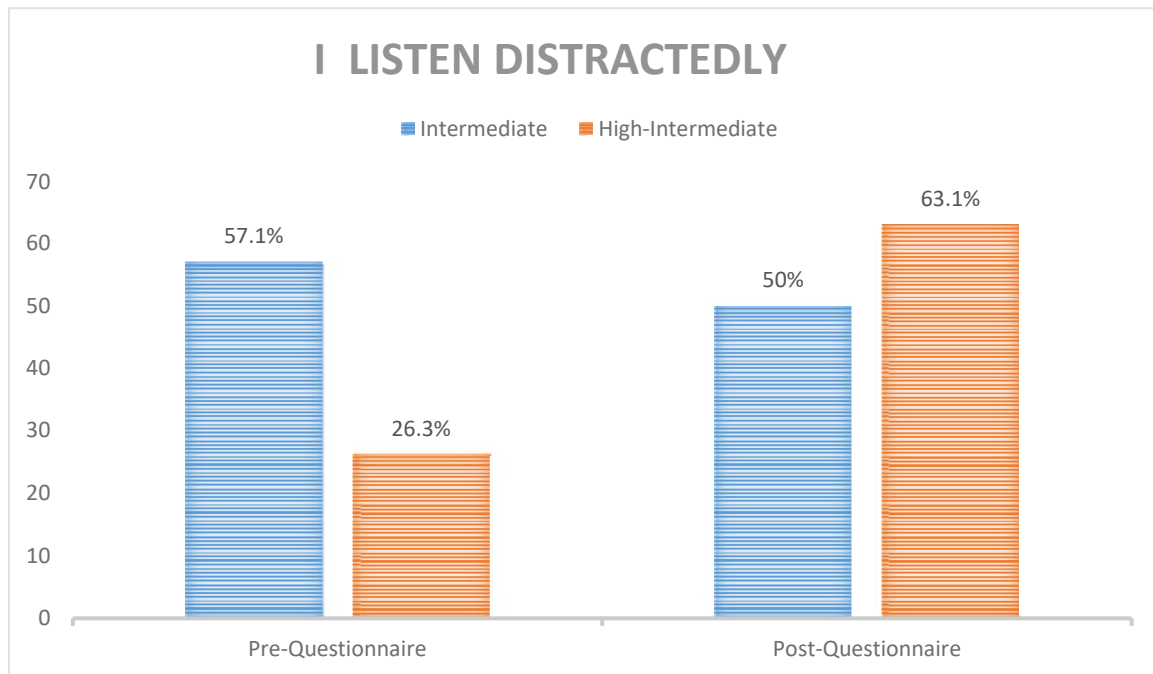
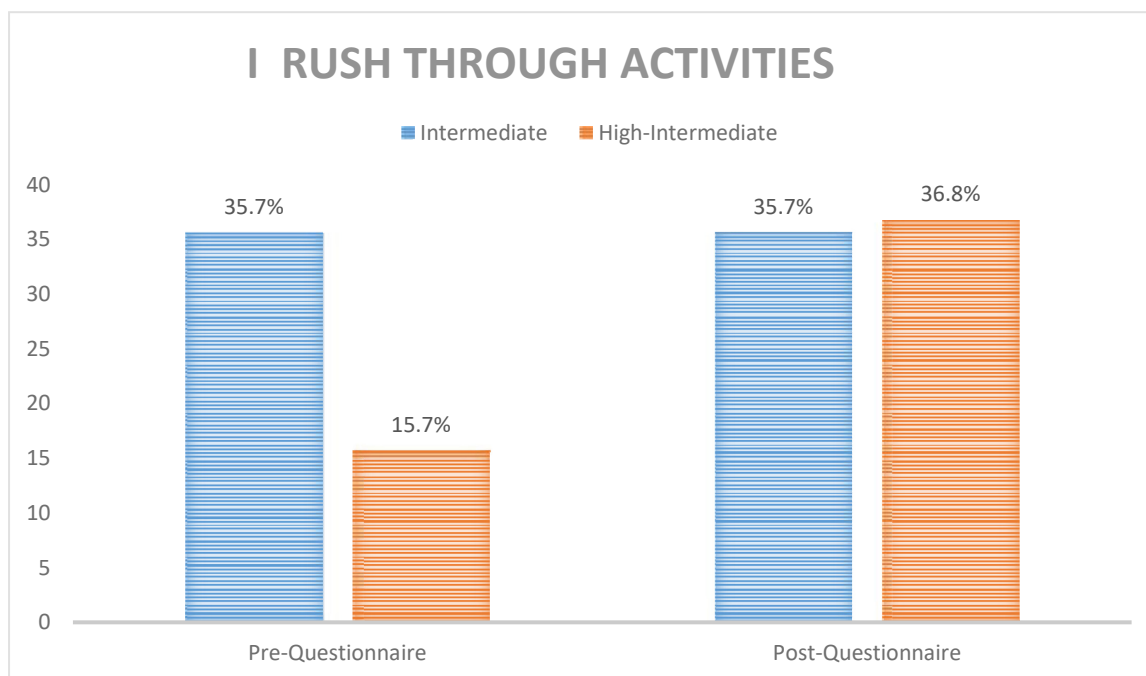
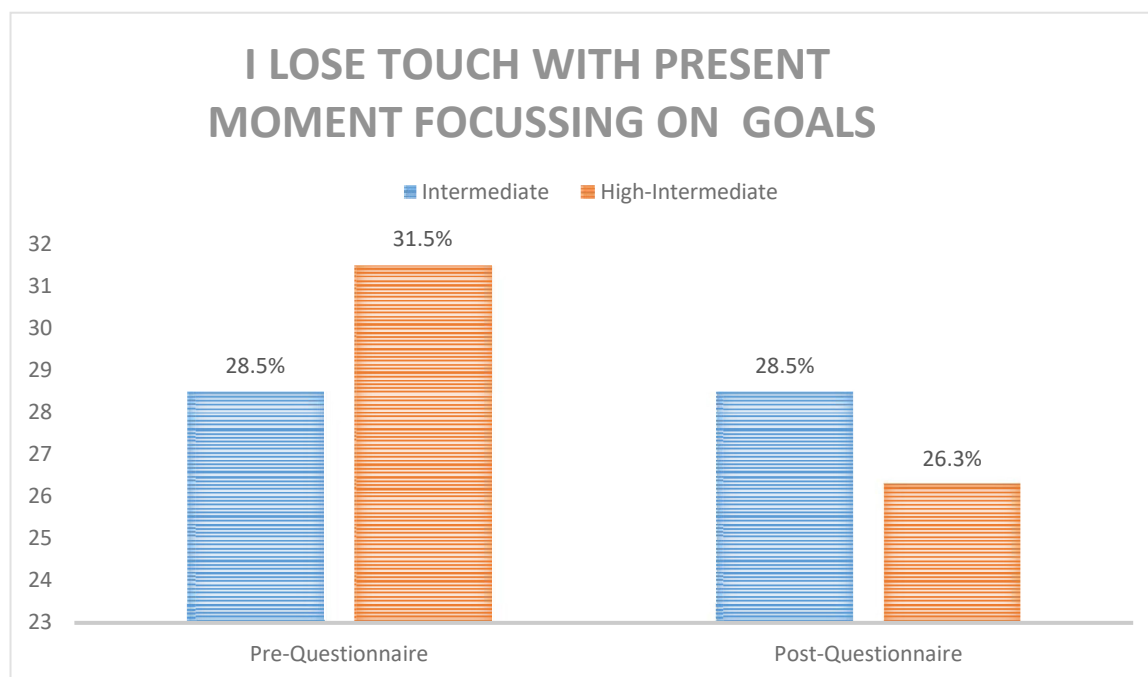


FIGURE 14: DISTRACTED LISTENING

Oral presentations require focus and presence. As Oman, Thoresen, Plante & Flinders (2008) found, one of the effects of mindfulness training was the lowering of stress and an increase in self-compassion and forgiveness; all qualities that foster present moment acceptance. The statements, "I rush through activities without being really attentive to them." and "I get so focussed on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there." give an indication as to how students feel while in the midst of presenting before their peers. In both the pre- and post-questionnaire, 35.7% of the intermediate students agreed with the first statement. For the high-intermediate students the pre-questionnaire agreement was 15.7%, and the post-questionnaire agreement rose to 36.8%. For the second statement, in the pre-questionnaire, intermediate students agreed at a rate of 28.5% for both questionnaires, while the high-intermediate students agreed to this statement at a rate of 31.5% in the first questionnaire, while dropping to 26.3% in the post-questionnaire.

**FIGURE 15: RUSH THROUGH ACTIVITIES****FIGURE 16: GOAL FOCUS**

5.5 FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

The second question the researcher sought to answer was *what do anxious students say about the experience of mindfulness activities and their effect on their presentation anxiety?*

The focus group took place on the premises of CEGEP Gerald-Godin on November 14th, 2018. There were seven students in attendance, four girls and three boys. The session was recorded in an audio file and lasted for a duration of about 15 minutes. Twelve questions were asked to the students regarding their impressions of the mindfulness module, and their previous experience with mindfulness practice. The students were completing their second ESL course and were enrolled in four different programs including Nursing, Natural Science, Computer Science, and Social Science. The participants had volunteered to be part of the focus group and discussion. The full transcript of the focus group discussion can be found in Appendix H.

The goal of the focus group was to answer the research question, “What do anxious students say about the experience of mindfulness activities and their effect on their presentation anxiety?” When the small group of students were asked if they had focussed on their breath during their final oral presentations, this notion was met with laughter. It was understood that none of them had specifically attempted to use mindful breathing to help them through their presentation. Nevertheless, almost unanimously the students described the experience of the introduction of mindfulness activities in class to be a positive one. All of the students had had previous experience with informal meditation and mindfulness. Two of the students mentioned the practice of yoga, either through a parent being a practitioner, or having done simple yoga exercises with a previous teacher. Of all the in-class activities, listening to the body scan guided meditation appeared to have the most impact. Three of the students mentioned this activity specifically.

As well, all of the students appeared open to continuing to incorporate mindfulness and meditation practices in their lives in the future. One of the students mentioned that he meditates regularly when he spends time in nature and therefore did not think the classroom was a fitting environment for him to incorporate meditation. Another was using online tools to help him relax and fall asleep, while another one had downloaded the app, which had been recommended to the class, and she had planned meditation into her daily schedule. One of the students felt that meditation was just not for her, while for another student, although it does not show up in the transcript, seemed somewhat skeptical of the mindfulness activities. He had earlier expressed a

closely held Christian faith. For him, the secular nature of mindfulness practice was somewhat in opposition to his own personal values and he preferred prayer to silent meditation.

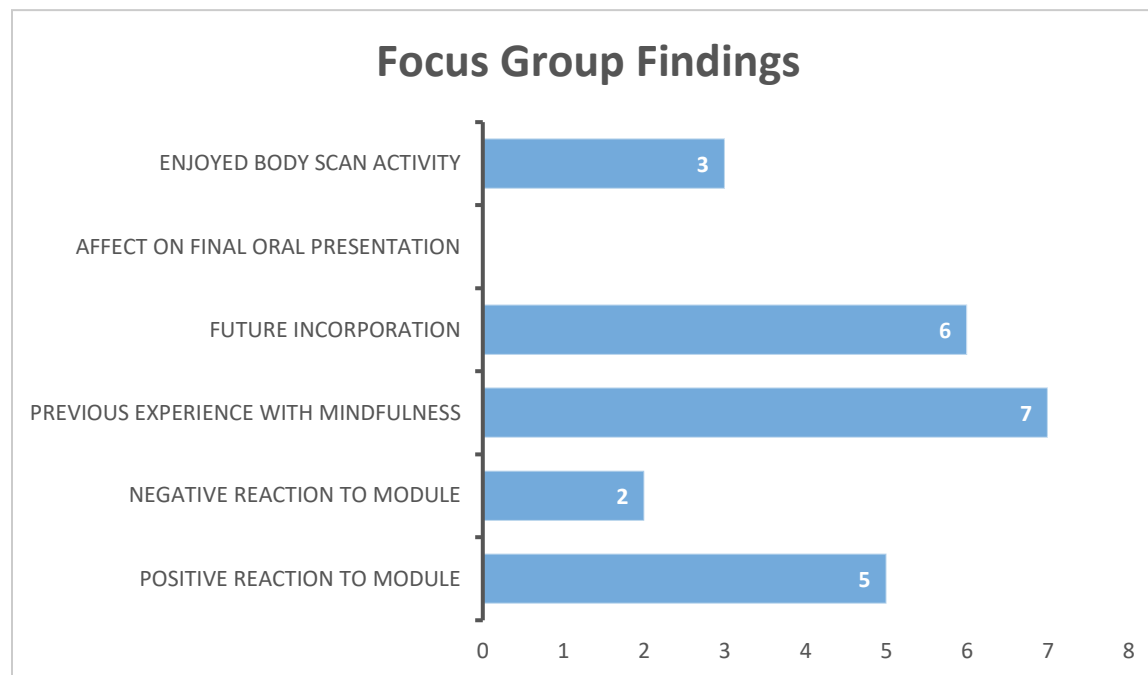
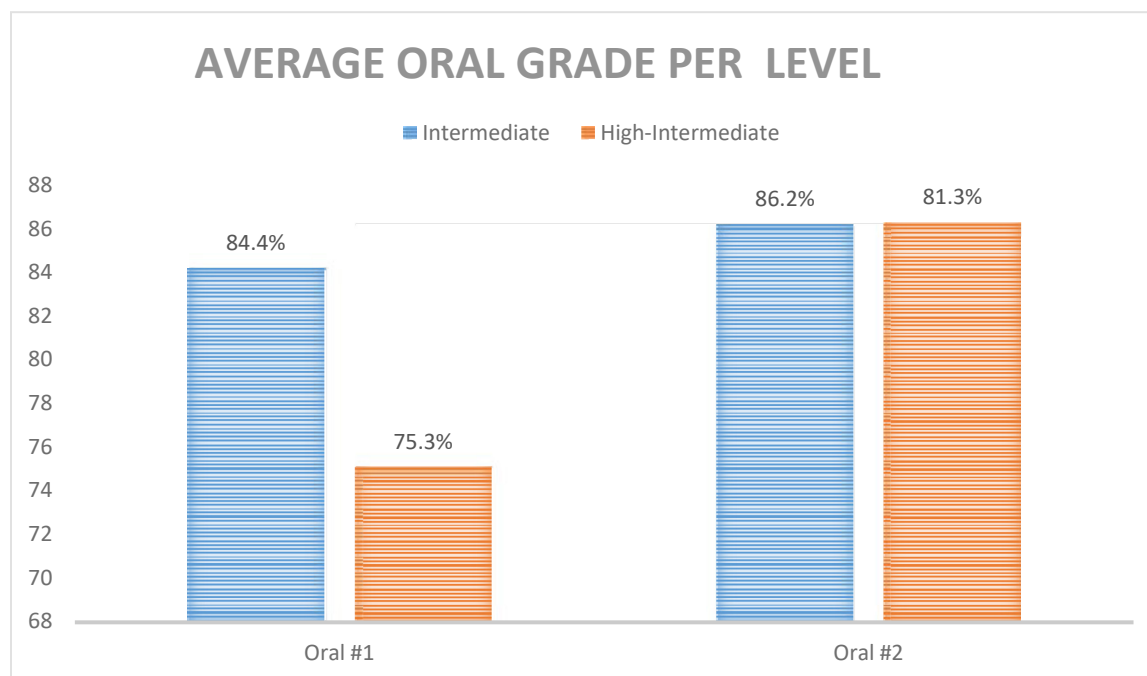


FIGURE 17: FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

5.6 COMPARISON OF ORAL PRESENTATION GRADES

One final analysis is the comparison of grades for the oral presentations completed by the students before the introduction of the mindfulness module and for the second presentation performed after the mindfulness intervention. For the high-intermediate students, the average grade for the first oral was 75.3% while the average grade for the second oral was 81.3%. For the intermediate-level students, the average grade of the first oral was 84.4% rising slightly to 86.2% for the final oral presentations.

This slight augmentation may be attributed to being more familiar and comfortable with the oral presentation process, or perhaps the earlier focus on the mindfulness module had its desired effect.

**FIGURE 18: ORAL PRESENTATION RESULTS**

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 DISCUSSION

This study sought to gauge the effects of mindfulness practice on student anxiety when performing oral presentations. In keeping with Social and Emotional Learning Theory, the self-management required to overcome anxiety and to find a path through emotional obstacles is at the core of mindfulness training. As Osher (2016) noted, the process of breath awareness and letting go of thoughts allows for this self-management to occur. This technique takes time and effort to learn and requires a level of discipline and consistency that could not easily be imposed in an ESL course over such a short time period. Nevertheless, there appeared to be a decrease particularly among the anxious high-intermediate level students in their reporting of feelings of the physical signs associated with anxiety. They also reported a decrease in feelings of inadequacy and perfectionism between the pre- and post-questionnaires. For the intermediate-level students, the main decrease of anxiety occurred in reported feelings of deficiency related to Emotional Intelligence.

As was expected, the simple introduction of the techniques elicited interest and curiosity. The self-awareness that Osher (2016) describes as an important component of SEL would need to be developed over time and with more specific class activities aimed to create this awareness.

Finally, the social awareness and responsible decision making of SEL could be more intentionally included throughout the semester and integrated into group activities to foster awareness around the process of awareness both towards others and self.

The four-week mindfulness module used as part of this research project served as a first stepping stone for the introduction of these techniques and with further adjustment could become an integral part of ESL college teaching.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

This research project aimed to introduce students to the possibility of developing their own mindfulness and awareness practices in order to better equip them to face the challenge of performing oral presentations in English class as part of the required course objectives. Through a four-week introduction and at-home practice of mindfulness meditation techniques, students were asked to fill in questionnaires both at the beginning and the end of the project to gauge their levels of anxiety for speaking English during an oral presentation, as well as their levels of self-awareness. Using videos, articles, writing and small group discussions students had the opportunity to integrate the concept of mindful awareness into their daily lives as they approached their end of term project involving a five-minute oral English presentation based on a topic they had been assigned during the semester.

It was expected that the students would enjoy the non-standard content of their course and would react favourably to the introduction of concrete actions they could perform in order to better prepare themselves for the anxiety-inducing exercise of speaking in front of a group of their peers. For the students who reported wanting to deepen their understanding and practice of meditation once the project and term had ended, yoga and meditation workshops were offered to interested participants in the winter and autumn semesters of 2019 outside of the context of an ESL course.

Results indicate that the sample size offered a fair representation of the percentage of students who suffer from academic anxiety in the general public. However, in response to the first research question, “Can the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques contribute to the mitigation of oral presentation anxiety in the college ESL classroom?” the results indicate that the high-intermediate students were more greatly affected by the mindfulness module than the intermediate-level students. Among the high-intermediate learners, the decrease in anxiety reported between the completions of the two questionnaires, was notable. The results of the post-questionnaire indicate that there was a decrease in the characteristics of anxiety including, physical response, feelings of inadequacy and perfectionism for this group. For the intermediate-level students, a decrease in anxiety related to perfectionism was obtained, but for the other characteristics, the percentages either increased or remained constant. This finding is useful in order to further develop studies or classroom activities relating these specific characteristics of anxious students to future mindfulness technique application.

This research study attempted to introduce the concept of mindfulness practice rather than the actual implementation of mindfulness meditation. This discrepancy may have impacted the experiment outcomes. Students were neither highly monitored nor obligated to attempt a daily meditation practice. A similar study with participants who intend to incorporate meditation for a prescribed time frame would most likely yield stronger outcomes.

For the second research question, “What do anxious students say about the experience of mindfulness activities and their effect on their presentation anxiety?”, the intermediate-level students who participated in the focus group were generally very positive about the novel experience and were open to further exploration in future courses. Although they did not report consciously integrating mindfulness techniques during their final oral presentations, they agreed that their awareness of the benefits of mindfulness practice had increased.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to a small sample of intermediate and high-intermediate level students studying in a variety of programs in one post-secondary institution in Quebec, over a limited period of time. An additional limitation note was the lack of a control group. To support the lack of control group in this study, it was decided that all students, regardless of their participation in the study, would be included, therefore no control group would be used. The students involved were self-reporting on all of the instruments. As well, due to deadline time constraints, the study was also limited to a specific, end of semester, four-week period at which time the data was gathered. Spreading the module over a wider time frame of the college semester would perhaps have yielded more significant results.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR MY TEACHING PRACTICE

Following the completion of this research study, a pilot project will be launched at CEGEP Gérald Godin to offer mindfulness meditation training to students who experience academic anxiety. This program will be available to all students who wish to implement and explore various breathing and relaxation techniques. Modeled after the Koru method, a stress-reduction program created at Duke University, this course was conceived for young adults who seek to lower their

academic stress levels for all of their courses, not just ESL. The program will be offered to all students in the CEGEP for one semester with the option for renewal depending on its popularity.

The integration of mindfulness in education is a growing trend. It is expected that the positive impact of this practice will lead to a more formal implementation of meditation training in more colleges, with the development of the tools and teacher training required. Within the modern languages department of CEGEP Gerald-Godin, there has been a request to create course materials to be shared with other teachers and to continue to develop and promote mindfulness across the language program. Furthermore, results of this study and the ensuing pilot project will be presented at a future conference for ESL teachers of Quebec. (RASCALS, SPEAQ)

6.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

This study involved four groups of ESL students participating in their normal class activities. Future research on the effects of mindfulness techniques for the reduction of academic anxiety would be best focussed on pre-selected populations with pre-identified anxiety concerns. The provision of a particular time frame and small group setting would be beneficial in order to better gauge the impact of mindfulness on academic anxiety. Whether higher level students are more or less prone to anxiety, and whether gender plays a role, are also potential paths for examination. As well, specific questionnaires focussing on student's implementation of mindfulness in the preparation and execution of their oral presentations could be explored.

6.6 CLOSING STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to introduce four groups of CEGEP ESL students to the concept of mindfulness meditation in order to help reduce the anxiety and nervousness they feel when called upon to present orally in front of their peers, and to offer a fresh approach in the preparation of this ministry-required task. It was hypothesised *that students would be interested in trying to incorporate novel techniques to increase their confidence in preparation of their final oral presentation anxiety for their end of term assignment*, and that *the activities covered in the four-session module would serve to plant the seed for the cultivation of what could become lifelong coping skills*. The execution of this research experiment allowed the teacher/researcher to better

understand how students react to the introduction of mindfulness techniques, and to know which activities were met with the most enthusiasm and openness. It was also expected that some students would say that the mindfulness activities were interesting and helpful while others would choose to continue with their own previously developed coping skills when dealing with the stress of performing oral presentations in ESL class.

This project used before and after questionnaires measuring students' levels of self-awareness and foreign language classroom anxiety, drawing on the work of Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003), and Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). The results of this research project add to the growing body of research and interest in the affects meditation and mindfulness practice in the realm of academics and in particular, the role of these techniques in the reduction of oral presentation anxiety. The researcher's hypothesis was supported as the high-intermediate students reported an overall decrease of 16.7% in stress and anxiety related to oral presentations between the pre- and post-questionnaires, whereas, in the same measure, the intermediate-level students reported a decrease of 4.2%. Therefore, it is recommended that CEGEP ESL instructors consider integrating mindfulness techniques into their classroom activities in order to help reduce the anxiety students report related to the task of performing oral presentations.

Presenting before a group will always be a standard task for most language courses. As well, teenage shyness and anxiety will also always be part of college education. The goal of the study was to show that by taking the time in class to integrate a few mindfulness techniques, our students can begin to reap the physiological and emotional advantages of mindfulness meditation at an age when they can most benefit and begin habits that can have a lifelong impact on both their physical and psychological well-being. It is hoped that this preliminary effort to provide a window into the benefits of mindfulness meditation to this small group of students will open up the possibility for the future inclusion of self-reflection and quiet contemplation in more college ESL classes across Quebec.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT ID _____

This first part of this survey is meant to let me know about your current state of self-awareness. The second part is to let me know how your feelings about oral presentations in English class. Please answer all of the questions. Answers will be anonymous.

Part 1

1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.
 - ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never

2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.
 - ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never

3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.
 - ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never

4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.
- ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never
5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.
- ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never
6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.
- ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never
7. It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.
- ☐ Almost Always
 - ☐ Very Often
 - ☐ Sometimes
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Almost Never

8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

12. I drive (or walk) to places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

15. I snack without being aware that I'm eating.

- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Very Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Almost Never

*Adapted from Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 822-848.

Part 2

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am doing an oral presentation in English class

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes when I am doing an oral presentation in English class.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

3. I tremble when I know it is my turn to do an English oral presentation

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

4. It doesn't bother me at all to do English oral presentations.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

5. When I watch other presentations I keep thinking that the other students present better than I do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

6. I am usually at ease during my oral presentations in English class.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

7. During my English oral presentations I can get so nervous I forget the things I know.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

8. I am not nervous speaking English with native speakers.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

9. Even if I am well prepared for my oral evaluation in English I feel anxious about it.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

10. I can feel my heart pounding when I am presenting or about to present an oral presentation in English class.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

11. I don't feel pressure to prepare well for my oral evaluations in English class.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

12. I always feel that other students speak English better than I do.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

13. I feel very self-conscious about presenting in English in front of the other students.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

14. I feel more tense and nervous about doing oral presentations in English than I do when presenting in other classes.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

15. I get nervous and confused when I have to do an oral presentation in English.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

16. I am a...

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ I identify as other

17. My age today is...

- ☐ 16
- ☐ 17
- ☐ 18
- ☐ 19
- ☐ 20
- ☐ 21
- ☐ 22
- ☐ over 22

18. The program I am currently studying in is...

- ☐ Sciences de la nature
- ☐ Sciences humaines (individu, société et monde)
- ☐ Sciences humaines (en action)
- ☐ Sciences humaines (administration)
- ☐ Arts, lettres et communications
- ☐ Double Dec (SN et SH individu)
- ☐ Double Dec (SN et Arts Lettres)
- ☐ Soins Infirmiers
- ☐ Technologie de la Production Pharmaceutique
- ☐ Électronique Programmable et Robotique
- ☐ TCG
- ☐ Informatique
- ☐ TEE
- ☐ Tremplin Dec

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

* Adapted from Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORMS FOR RESEARCH MODULE

Student Consent Form (Mindfulness Module) for Meg Gillespie

Mindfulness Module in an ENGLISH 102 English a Second Language Course at CEGEP Gerald Godin as part of the requirement for Formation Générale.

This project will present a case study on the impact of the introduction of mindfulness techniques in the reduction of anxiety for students presenting their final oral projects. I am asking your permission to gather your responses to a questionnaire about your own level of self-awareness as well as your feeling about doing oral presentations in English. This questionnaire will take about ten minutes of your time. The aim of this case study is to find out how we can help improve the learning process and reduce anxiety. Please read below and if you agree to participate, please sign the consent form below. Results of this research case study will be made available upon request to any interested participant.

Consent to Participate in Research

I, _____ agree to take part in a case study about students' self-awareness and the introduction of mindfulness techniques. I understand that participation in the case study will involve answering a questionnaire, watching videos and doing writing and speaking activities related to mindfulness techniques.

I have been informed that my participation in the research is voluntary, and I am completely free to decide whether or not to participate in this research project. If I decide not to participate in the case study, my academic performance will not be jeopardized.

I understand my name will not appear in the research results. All of my specific answers from the questionnaires will remain strictly confidential. I have been told that all appropriate measures to ensure the confidentiality of any information about me will remain confidential. I will not be identified in any report or presentation that may arise from the case study. It has also been explained to me that the data gathered may be used for other research studies in the future. If this is done, the same practices to ensure confidentiality will be observed as within this case study. I have read the contents of this consent form and the above research procedures have been explained to me. I have been encouraged to ask questions, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this case study. I have been given a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

x _____

Signature of Participant) (Date) (Printed Name)

Statement of Parent/Guardian Consent (for participants under the age of 18 years

I certify that I am the legal parent or guardian for (Names) _____

Born _____ (Date of Birth).

I certify that I have read the above information, understand that the risks, benefits, responsibilities and conditions of participation as outlined in this document and freely consent to

_____’s participation in the proposed case study on mindfulness techniques.

x _____
(Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date) (Printed Name)

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What are your overall impressions of the “Mindfulness Module”?
2. Had you heard about mindfulness techniques in other classes? Which classes?
3. What is your past experience with mindfulness practice outside of school?
4. Did you practice meditating at home? Was it new to you?
5. When you did your final oral presentation, did you try to be aware of your breath?
If yes was it helpful? If no, why did you not try the technique?
6. Do you think you will continue to strive to practice mindfulness?
7. Have you ever done yoga?
8. What did you like the best about the mindfulness module?
9. What did you like the least?
10. What suggestions would you make for future courses involving the teaching of mindfulness?

APPENDIX D: PERFORMA ETHICS RECOMMENDATION

Recommandation éthique PERFORMA

Référence : Politique UdeS 2500-028 - Politique en matière d'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains.¹ Et formulaire de demande CER-ESS²

ÉVALUATEUR OU ÉVALUATRICE : Denyse Lemay	DATE : Le 20 avril 2018
NOM DU CHERCHEUR OU CHERCHEUSE ET TITRE DU PROJET : Margaret Gillespie A Mindfulness Approach for the Mitigation of Oral Presentation Anxiety in CEGEP ESL Students	FINANCEMENT DU PROJET? NON

LIGNES DIRECTRICES DE LA POLITIQUE EN MATIÈRE D'ÉTHIQUESⁱ

INTÉGRITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE	PRÉSENT OU NON P/NP	CONFORME OU NON C/NC
<i>Résumé du projet de recherche</i>	P	C
<i>Méthodologie</i>	P	C
<i>Présence et signature d'une direction d'essai</i>	P	C
<i>Aucune rétribution pour le chercheur ou la chercheuse ou le directeur d'essai et la recherche)</i>	P	C
<i>Implication directe de la chercheuse ou le chercheur dans la collecte de données (lien direct entre son rôle au quotidien</i>	P	C
Commentaires		

¹ http://www.usherbrooke.ca/accueil/fileadmin/sites/accueil/documents/direction/politiques/2500-028_Recherche_etres_humains_vf_adopte_CU-2014-02-12.pdf

² <http://www.usherbrooke.ca/gestion-recherche/ethique-sante-et-securite/recherche-avec-les-etres-humains/cer-education-et-sciences-sociales/formulaires-et-depot-dune-demande/>

ÉQUILIBRE DES RISQUES ET DES BÉNÉFICES	PRÉSENT OU NON P/NP	CONFORME OU NON C/NC
<i>Sous le seuil du risque minimal</i>	P	C
<i>Identification des risques</i>	P	C
<i>Identification des bénéfices</i>	P	C
<i>Mesures permettant de diminuer les risques identifiés.</i>	-	-
Commentaires		

CONSENTEMENT LIBRE ET ÉCLAIRÉ	PRÉSENT OU NON P/NP	CONFORME OU NON C/NC
<i>Voir le contenu du formulaire de consentement</i>	P	C
Commentaires		

CONFIDENTIALITÉ DES DONNÉES	PRÉSENT OU NON P/NP	CONFORME OU NON C/NC
<i>Utilisation prévue, protection, conservation</i>	P	C
<i>Conditions pour recherche impliquant des personnes mineures et/ou légalement inaptes</i> <i>Justification d'une recherche non consensuelle</i>	-	-
<i>Conditions pour utilisation secondaire des données entraînant l'identification des sujets</i>	-	-
Commentaires		

FORMULAIRE(S) DE CONSENTEMENT	PRÉSENT OU NON P/NP	CONFORME OU NON C/NC
<i>Titre complet du projet</i>	P	C
<i>Identité du chercheur principal et ses coordonnées</i>	P	C
<i>Invitation à participer à un projet de recherche</i>	P	C
<i>But de la recherche</i>	P	C
<i>Nature et durée de la participation</i>	P	C
<i>Mesures de protection de la confidentialité</i>	P	C
<i>Accès aux données (lieu, moyen, durée de conservation, personnes y ayant accès)</i>	P	C
<i>Moyens de diffusion des résultats de la recherche</i>	P	C
<i>Utilisations secondaires possibles</i>	-	-
<i>Liberté de participer ou non et de se retirer, sans préjudice</i>	P	C
<i>Bénéfices, risques et inconvénients</i>	P	C
<i>Mesures pour pallier les risques</i>	-	-
<i>Date et signature du chercheur (et témoin si risque élevé)</i>	P	C
<i>Nom, date et signature du participant</i>	P	C
<i>Identification de la direction de l'essai</i>	P	C
<i>S'il y a lieu Sources de financement de la recherche</i>		
<i>Intention du chercheur de poursuivre l'étude et de communiquer à nouveau avec les sujets</i>	-	-
<i>Justification et montant de l'indemnité pour participer à la recherche</i>	-	-
<i>Possibilité de commercialisation des résultats</i>	-	-
<i>Existence de tout conflit d'intérêt</i>	-	-
Commentaires In the consent form for the students, the author doesn't mention the participation to a focus group as the ultimate activity at the end of the experimentation, which one she mentions in the description of her methodology. It would be more fair to announce that activity too to the students if it still makes part of the methodology.		

RECOMMANDATION À LA SUITE DE L'ÉVALUATION

- ☐ Favorable
- ☒ Favorable sous réserve de modifications mineures
- ☐ Favorable sous réserve de modifications majeures
(attendre les corrections avant l'envoi du certificat)
- ☐ Défavorable : corriger et soumettre à nouveau

Résumé des commentaires et autres:

La recherche est menée en respectant les principes éthiques d'une recherche.
Minor modification : Add in the consent form for the students the participation to a focus group at the end of the experimentation. The students must know exactly what they are asked for.

Note :

Prendre note qu'une recommandation reçue de l'Université de Sherbrooke ne peut remplacer une autorisation locale pour procéder à la cueillette de données auprès de sujets humains dans son établissement. Cependant, la recommandation obtenue confirmera que le projet d'essai respecte les normes éthiques de l'Université de Sherbrooke-secteur Performa au plan de la recherche.

APPENDIX E: CERTIFICAT D'ACCEPTABILITÉ D'ÉTHIQUE



Faculty of Education
Form for the ethical evaluation of projects

1. PROJECT COORDINATOR(S)

Student(s): Margaret Gillespie

Telephone number: 514-591-XXXX

Email: m.gillespie@cgodin.qc.ca

Study program: M.Ed. College Teaching

Pedagogical activity: MEC

Project director: **Stephen Taylor, PhD**

Registration semester of activity: Spring 2018

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project title: A Mindfulness Approach for the Mitigation of Oral Presentation Anxiety in CEGEP ESL Students

Project funding:

None ☒ Source:

Is it an inter-college project?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, other colleges involved:

Date for beginning of data collection: April 20th 2018

Project summary

Over a four week period students will be introduced to the concept of mindfulness through the viewing of 2 videos, reading one article, small group discussion and homework to try to find 10 minutes a day to practice mindful meditation. The goal is to teach the students about the benefits and usefulness of mindful attention in order to help decrease and deal with the anxiety associated with performing oral presentations in English class (which many consider to be a high stress event). Students will fill out a questionnaire at the beginning of the project and again at the end which asks them about their level of anxiety to speak in English, as well as questions about their levels of personal mindfulness awareness. At the end of the four weeks student will do their final oral presentations and will be encouraged to use the mindfulness techniques to help them perform better. A focus group will be held at the end of the module with volunteer students.

3. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Balance between risks and benefits

What are the risks to participants? I believe there are no risks and only benefits as they may find the techniques useful, but if they are not interested then it will only be more information for them to perhaps draw upon in the future if they feel the need, but it is purely voluntary if they wish to integrate the new strategies.

Is the project located below the threshold of minimal risk?³ yes

If there is a possibility of risk to participants, what measures will you take to mitigate these risks?

How much time is required for participation? Throughout the first three weeks, each lesson will take approximately 30 minutes. The final week involves answering the questionnaire for the 2nd time and this will take 10 minutes.

What are the benefits to participants? The benefits are that the techniques should help students to reduce their stress and to feel more relaxed when performing their final oral presentation.

Is there any monetary or other compensation for project participation such as for time spent or travel, etc.?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, justify, and specify the form of compensation:

Free and informed consent

Is the research **consensual** in nature?

Will consent of participating individuals be requested? Will they be aware that they are involved in a trial project in the context of a master's degree in college teaching (MEC) and aware of the type of project?

³ Minimal risk is present when the probability of occurrence and the level of possible risk or drawbacks are comparable to those encountered in the daily life of participants.

Yes ☒No ☐

What are the **measures taken to ensure the free and informed consent of all participants?**

Students will fill out a consent form before the project begins.

How will participants for the project be recruited? The participants are students in four of my classes.

When will the consent forms be distributed and signed by the participants? It will be distributed at the beginning of class on April 20th for the first group, and for the other groups at the beginning of class on April 23rd and 25th.

Who will be handing out and collecting the consent forms? The teacher/researcher.

Does the project involve **minors and/or legally incompetent individuals?**

Yes ☐No ☒

If yes, specify the precautions taken in this regard: Le consentement parental est exigé par la loi pour la participation de mineurs. IF any students are under the age of 18 they can have their parent sign the form and join the project later.

Confidentiality of data

What measures will be taken to ensure **the confidential nature and anonymity of data?**

Questionnaires will be completed on paper using only a student ID number as as identification. Completed forms will be given to the supervisor once the study is complete.

Any names and the student numbers will be removed and the questionnaires will be recoded with randomly determined code numbers, before they are returned to Ms.Gillespie.

Where will the data be stored? Will they be stored under lock and key? Will electronic files be password protected?

Data will be stored under lock and key while being processed for the project.

All electronic files will be password protected.

Who will have access to the data? Meg Gillespie and Stephen Taylor

When will the raw data be destroyed (paper questionnaires, cassettes of interviews, etc.)?

Paper questionnaires will be shredded after the project is completed and the thesis has been accepted, and the degree granted

How will results be **disseminated**?

Through the publication of the final thesis submission.

4. COMMITMENT OF THE SUPERVISOR

As the Supervisor of this research project, I have reviewed the above ethical aspects of the project and have also reviewed the Consent Form. I attest that the information contained in these forms has been provided in good faith by **Margaret Gillespie**.

Name of the Supervisor: Stephen G. Taylor stephen.gilbert.taylor@usherbrooke.ca OR stevetaylorphd@hotmail.com


Signature: SEE NEXT PAGE FOR IMAGE!

Date: 2018 April 16

4. COMMITMENT OF THE SUPERVISOR

As the Supervisor of this research project, I have reviewed the above ethical aspects of the project and have also reviewed the Consent Form. I attest that the information contained in these forms has been provided in good faith by **Margaret Gillespie**.

Name of the Supervisor: Stephen G. Taylor
stephen.gilbert.taylor@usherbrooke.ca

Signature: 

Date: 2018 April 16

APPENDIX F: FORM FOR THE ETHICAL EVALUATION OF PROJECT

Certificat d'acceptabilité d'éthique

No. 14

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche du Cégep Gerald-Godin a examiné le projet de recherche suivant :

Responsable(s) du projet : **Meg Gillespie**

Département programme ou regroupement : **Langues modernes**

Titre du projet : **A mindfulness approach for the mitigation of oral presentation anxiety in Cegop ESL students.**

No. projet CÉR-GG : **16-H18**

Ce protocole de recherche est jugé conforme aux exigences formulées dans la *Politique d'éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains* du Cégep Gerald-Godin et l'*Énoncé de politique des trois Conseils : Éthique de la recherche avec des êtres humains* (2014).

Le présent certificat est valide pour la durée du projet.

- Rapport du statut du projet (renouvellement du certificat ou fin du projet) attendu au plus tard le : 20 avril 2019.

Membres du Comité d'éthique de la recherche

Membres	Fonction/Discipline	Département ou organisme externe
Fredérique Blouin	M.Sc. (Agroforesterie)	Sciences de la nature
Hélène Chabot	M.A. (Philosophie)	Philosophie
Danny King	M.Env. (Environnement)	Membre externe : Inovae Socialis
Debby Ann Philie	M.A. (Pédagogie)	Activités d'enseignement
Geneviève Simard	Ph.D. (Psychologie)	Sciences humaines
Marie-Sophie Briquet Gagnon	M.A. (Philosophie)	Philosophie
Isabelle Legault	Ph.D (Psychologie)	Formation continue

Date de la réunion : 19 avril 2018

Date d'émission initiale du certificat : 19 avril 2018

Hélène Chabot, M.A., Vice-présidente

APPENDIX G: ATTESTATION DE CONFORMITÉ ÉTHIQUE

ATTESTATION DE CONFORMITÉ ETHIQUE

LE SECTEUR PERFORMA-UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE CERTIFIE AVOIR EXAMINÉ LE PROJET

DATE DU RAPPORT	NOM DU PROJET	NOM, PRENOM DE L'ÉTUDIANTE OU DE L'ÉTUDIANT
20 avril 2018	A Mindfulness Approach for the Mitigation of Oral Presentation Anxiety in CEGEP ESL Students	Margaret Gillespie

PROGRAMME

Maîtrise en enseignement au collégial (M. Éd.)

ÉQUIPE DE DIRECTION DU PROJET D'ESSAI

	NOM	PRÉNOM
DIRECTRICE OU DIRECTEUR	Taylor	Stephen

PERFORMA ESTIME QUE LE PROJET PROPOSÉ EST CONFORME AUX PRINCIPES ÉTHIQUES ÉNONCÉS DANS LE DOCUMENT : *BALISES RELATIVES À UNE DEMANDE D'ATTESTATION FACULTAIRE DE CONFORMITÉ ÉTHIQUE*

CONFIRMATION DES INTERVENANTES ET INTERVENANTS

DIRECTRICE OU DIRECTEUR	Taylor	Stephen
EVALUATRICE OU ÉVALUATEUR	Lemay	Denyse
RESPONSABLE DE PROGRAMME	Lakhal	Sawsen

LA RESPONSABLE DE PROGRAMME

SIGNATURE	DATE
	20 avril 2018
Sawsen Lakhal, professeure, responsable de la maîtrise en enseignement au collégial	

PRENDRE NOTE QU'UNE CERTIFICATION ÉTHIQUE REÇUE DU SECTEUR PERFORMA NE PEUT REMPLACER UNE AUTORISATION LOCALE DE PROCÉDER À LA COLLECTE DE DONNÉES AUPRÈS DE SUJETS HUMAINS DANS UN AUTRE ÉTABLISSEMENT. CÉPENDANT, LA CERTIFICATION OBTENUE CONFIRMERA QUE LE PROJET D'ESSAI DE MAÎTRISE EST CONFORME AUX PRINCIPES ÉTHIQUES ÉNONCÉS DANS LE DOCUMENT : *BALISES RELATIVES À UNE DEMANDE D'ATTESTATION FACULTAIRE DE CONFORMITÉ ÉTHIQUE*.

APPENDIX H: TRANSCRIPT

Meg: So the first question is “What are your overall impressions of the idea of incorporating mindfulness into your student and daily life?” So a lot of you guys had read books about that. But what are your overall impressions of the idea of meditating, or taking a breath into your daily life, either meditating at home or doing it in class. Anybody have any thoughts about that?

Alexandra: I think it’s really helped me concentrate more on myself and have less stress in the daily basis.

Meg: of yeah, If you do it. It doesn’t have to be positive, it could be like there is no way I’m going to do that. But what do you think.

Rafael: For me it’s kind of natural, its my way of life actually. Just walk, think and read, do meditation. For me it’s natural.

Meg: Ok so it’s not anything new. Anything else?

Rafael: No,

Meg: Cool anything else?

Arianne: I think it’s a really good idea. Like of meditating every day. But for me it doesn’t really work. It would help me work to fall asleep but not to calm down if I just have an exam and I have to study I wouldn’t be able to meditate, it just makes me want to sleep more than anything. So maybe do that more before bed but I thought it was a better idea, like last time in class when we were listening to the guy talking and like he was going through the body. That gave me more energy than just meditating so I think that would work better for me personally.

Meg: Yeah, thanks, anybody else?

Frederike: For me I think I don’t do it right, because it stress me more than anything. When I don’t do anything I just think about my life and it stress me. I’m not kind of a meditation person.

Laurence I think that in the beginning, it’s like really difficult to just like get into it. I started to get into it when you told us to download the app. At first I was really like, I couldn’t do it and be on it 100% but now I’m doing it and I have a little schedule to .. and I think that I feel a little bit more relaxed.

Meg: Yeah? That’s cool. Anybody else?

Gabriel: For me, I don't think meditation is the solution for stress. I know it can help, but I don't see it as a solution. So, that's my point of view.

Meg: That's fair too.

Sami: It helps me a lot, especially before going to bed. When I go to bed I think of a lot of things – my future, my scores at school, and when I meditate I forget every bad idea, I just focus on myself and my wellbeing and that helps.

Meg: Good. And have you been introduced to mindfulness techniques in areas of your life outside of school? Have you guys ever like, you must have, Gabriel, ever, like, meditation and contemplation have you learned about that outside of school?

Gabriel: my friend

Meg: Oh yeah, through your friends?

Frederik: My aunt.

Laurence: Yeah my mom she's doing a lot of yoga. So

Meg: What about you Sami?

Sami: I saw it on youtube. Youtube videos, I just keep watching them.

Ariane: That's true. Like sometimes before watching youtube videos and there is an ad, it's like, it's like literally the same thing that the video of the guy the other day, what if you just take a moment to concentrate about yourself and it's like before some of the youtube videos and like you can skip it if you want because it's long, I think it's like two minutes, it's not long, but it's a long ad before your youtube video when you want to watch something.

Meg: Ok, have you heard about mindfulness and meditation in other classes? Have you talked about it in other classes? Which classes?

Ariane: Psychiatry.

Meg: Oh yeah, psychiatry? Ok, not in gym?

Sami: When I was in high school yes. My French teacher she used to make us do yoga before each class of French.

Meg: And did anybody practice meditating at home or on the bus? Were you mindful walking to your car or any of that, did you incorporate any of that? Not particularly? You did a little bit at home eh Laurence?

Ariane: Honestly when I'm really desperate at night and I can't sleep at all, and I've tried everything, I try, I'm like, let me try meditation. I don't know, I'm not really, um, I'm not really, used to doing meditation, let me just sit in my bed and think about nothing. But then I tell myself that I have to think about nothing so then I'm thinking, and then, I'm, I'll fall asleep when I fall asleep.

Meg: Well we'll have to talk about techniques but yeah for sure. And during your day are you ever aware of being mindful? Any particular times or all over the place?

Rafael: Sometimes. Oh yeah, exactly.

Meg: Ok, what about when you did your oral presentation a few moments ago, did you try to be aware of your breath?

Ariane + others: No (laughing)

Meg: Ok, and do you think that will try to incorporate it into your life as you get older and as you go through more school and stuff? Potentially? Ok.

Have you ever done yoga? They are nodding their heads. Ok! Yes. That's good.

Which of the things that we did in class, we did a body scan, we watched a couple videos, you read an article, and we did the raisin experiment, of those things what do you think was the most enjoyable or had the most impact on you?

Laurence: The body scan. I don't know for other people, but I kind of had the image just put like a laser on me and just scrolled down all the way. Yeah it was fun and it was a good feeling.

Ariane: It felt like things you couldn't feel, when he was like now you can feel your heartbeat even when you are like super calm, because we're used to knowing we're stressed and like we feel our heart, our heart like pounds, but now I could still feel it, but being super calm, and not stressed. Like I didn't come back from the gym class.

Meg: Yeah, it's always happening but we don't notice it. Ok, what did you like the least out of the videos out of the raisin thing was there anything you didn't really like.

Rafael: Actually I hated it all.

Meg: You hated all of it, oh ok.

Rafael: But that's because when I'm meditating I do that in the forest, so it's not, it's really different for me, doing that in class with people, because my trick is nature it's not being in class and meditating.

Meg: Ok, Got ya, got ya. And what would you suggest for future courses for teaching mindfulness? Like do you have any suggestions?

Frederik: Like when we do the body scan, maybe like, be able to lay down and be more comfortable, because being on a chair wasn't the best.

Meg: Oh yeah, I'd be all over that, that's a great idea. Do oral presentation cause you a lot of stress normally? And why? Do you know why?

Frederick: I don't like to speak in front of people. When I'm sitting down it's not that bad.

Ariane: In the official context you are judged by someone.

Rafael: Actually in class I hate that. But I did one presentation in front of a bank and I loved it. All the adrenalin I got in that moment, there was like thirty persons that was listening to me and was well dressed.

Meg: And it wasn't students.

Rafael: It was like thirty, forty people.

Laurence: But I think it depends, because I know sometimes I'm really stressed in front of the class. And some of the times, I'm not stressed, I don't know why, but I'm just comfortable, and it's not because I practiced or I don't know, it's just that, sometimes I'm really, really stressed and I don't know what to do and the other times I'm comfortable and I could talk more.

Meg: Ok, anybody else want to add to that?

Ariane: I'm not usually like, thinking about it before, like I just listen to the other people if I'm not the first one to pass. And it doesn't really matter to me when I do the presentation, but when I stand up, I'm like, oh' it's my turn now, so then I have to set my mind, you can't listen to people now, people are going to listen to you.

Meg: You still feel relaxed?

Ariane: Yeah, I try to, I feel like I was always really calm in front of people. It was all just interior.

Sami: Do you mind repeating the question?

Meg: Yeah, do oral presentations cause you a lot of stress normally and why?

Sami: I would say yes, because of the judgement of others, other people. How do I talk, what is my content?

Gabriel: I think sometimes because you are not well prepared or you don't know feel like you know enough the subject in order to speak.

Meg: Ya, and what about if there were a series of audio recordings and home exercises available to be done on your own at home, throughout the semester to reduce anxiety, would you use them if the teacher prepared weekly things for you to do at home just to keep you , as part of the course but not being marked. Just, ah do you think you would do that if you knew there was audios you could listen to each week, prepared by your teacher? I'm thinking of doing a project like that.

Rafael: I think I would.

Ariane: I do too.

Sami: It would be nice to each course we do a meditation, before beginning the actual course. We'd be more focussed on the subject.

Ariane: That's a good idea because when we started doing like mediation in class, and we did it like the second class, I'm like, I'm going to English class, it's not going to be a stressful class because I knew we were going to do a little activity like that we were going to have time to breathe, because we don't usually have to breathe for our other important classes. So, yeah.

Frederik: For the capsules, you said, you wanted to do every week, for me I think it would depend the week. If there's a lot of exams and everything I don't think I would use them, but if it's the first week of school that's ok.

Meg: That's good. Alright and do your English oral presentations cause you more or less stress than presentations in other subjects?

Everyone: Less.

Meg: And you have oral presentations in other subjects? A little bit?

Meg: In nursing yes?

Ariane: Well it's just we have to present big projects that we established. And yes it's oral presentations, but it's mostly because like, you have to sell yourself and you have to sell your project, and you want to do good, and you want to look professional and that's hard.

Meg: Ok, good! Anything else you want to add, we are at the end of the questions. So your overall rating of adding mindfulness to your English class to help reduce anxiety, what would you give that. What would you give it. Be honest, I don't care. Do you think it's useful to do mindfulness in class?

Ariane: Yes, but maybe more on a regular basis.

Meg: Ok , good!

(end of recording)